

The Seven Proofs

**Haji Siyyid ‘Alí Muhammad Shirazi
(The Báb)**

A.L.M. Nicolas

Peter Terry, translator and editor

Volume III of the Bábí Studies Series

First English rendering of A.L.M. Nicolas’ first translation of a complete volume from the Writings of Hají Siyyid ‘Alí-Muhammad Shírází (The Báb). The original was published in French in 1902. The present edition includes the detailed annotations compiled and verified by the translator.

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Foreword

Whenever words and phrases are in *italics*, **bolded** or in CAPITAL LETTERS, these effects have been adopted for emphasis, and are not integral to the original source texts.

Quotations from texts and sayings are indented for the most part, and are identified as often as possible in the footnotes.

The reader may well wonder why the present translator, in contradistinction to A.L.M. Nicolas in the French edition has capitalized all pronouns referring to the Author of this text. The reason for adopting this convention is both simple and hopefully elegant — the Author is so unlike most other writers, and is accounted by many of His readers to be superior to kings and popes. Out of respect for their high offices, kings are addressed to this day as “His” and “Her” Majesty” and popes as “His Holiness” and “His Eminence”. We have also capitalized pronouns referring to the Prophets, including Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, throughout the text, in observance of the same consideration. We have however not adopted the practice of many writers in Persian and Arabic, who employ honorifics in order to denote our Protagonist and the Prophets.

BOOK OF THE SEVEN PROOFS OF HAJI SIYYID ‘ALÍ MUHAMMAD SHIRAZI (THE BÁB)

PROVISIONAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF "DALÁ'IL-I-SAB'IH" FROM THE FRENCH OF A.L.M.
NICOLAS BY PETER TERRY

English Translator’s Preface

Peter Terry

So much has been written about Haji Siyyid ‘Alí Muhammad the Báb during the 106 years since the publication of Nicolas’ translation of “Dalá’il-i-Sab’ih” that a mere preface cannot possibly review such scholarship, such erudition and such penetrating insight into one of the most mysterious and compelling figures of the modern Middle East, and indeed of the 19th century in which he was lived. The Báb was as fascinating a figure, personally and ideologically as Karl Marx or Johannes Brahms, as Charles Darwin or Walt Whitman, as Mary Baker Eddy or Queen Victoria. Indeed, He was so attractive that His enemies were not content to merely silence Him...they had to kill Him and as many of His followers as they could find, and destroy His writings and condemn His ideas wherever they made their appearance. Only eradication could offer them the solace of refuge from His heresy, His blasphemy, His radical and unyielding challenge to the world He inherited.

This work is the Báb’s response to the shrill voices among His co-religionists who derided His claims and shouted for the proofs of His prophethood. In these “seven proofs” the Báb states His case, and gives the reader but two choices—to deny or to affirm. There is no middle ground here. So proceed at your own risk. Ignorance is an excuse...if you read on, there will be no excuse accepted, and whichever way you turn, there will be consequences.

French Translator's Preface

A. L. M. Nicolas

The "Book of the Seven Proofs" is the most important of the polemical¹ works which issued from the pen of Siyyid 'Alí Muhammad², called the Báb.

It appears to be difficult to fix a date for the completion of this book by its Author. Actually, it is generally admitted that it was composed during His voyage to Mecca³ in response to the objections or the questions of one of the 'ulama⁴ of Yazd⁵. That this book is a response to an interrogator is not in doubt as one can see from the beginning; that it was composed for one of the 'ulama of Yazd is, after all, of little importance; but that it was written during His Meccan voyage cannot be admitted.

As it is established in my work, "A Prophet in the Nineteenth Century"⁶ — the first writings of the new Apostle are: 1) the "Risaliy-i-Fiqhiyyih"⁷; 2) the "Commentary on the Surah of Yusuf"⁸; 3) probably some of the verses of the "Bayán"⁹; 4) the collection of Surahs known by the name of "Kitab al-haramayn"¹⁰, and 5) the "Kitab al-Ruh"¹¹, revealed mid-sea¹², on the return voyage from Mecca, between Maskat¹³ and Bushihr¹⁴.

Now, the tradition that during his pilgrimage the Báb composed a work in response to certain questions posed to Him by a contradictor is perfectly exact. The "Kitab al-haramayn" gives us the proof of this tradition because it is that response. That work, which is certainly the one which Monsieur de Gobineau¹⁵ calls "The Journal of the Pilgrimage" is dated¹⁶, and its text gives precious indications of the History of the beginnings of the Bábi Faith. I cite long excerpts therefrom in the book which I have cited above¹⁷. In the present context, it may be sufficient for the reader to know that the Báb responds therein in lengthy manner to a person named Haji Siyyid 'Alí Kirmani¹⁸, who hesitates to recognize Him in His prophetic station. The argument He employs therein is moreover completely different from that which we encounter here¹⁹ — it is based almost entirely upon this verse of the "Qur'án"²⁰:

[This is the truth from your Lord: therefore do not doubt it.] To those who dispute with you concerning Jesus after the knowledge you have received, say: "Come, let us gather our sons and your sons, our wives and your wives, our people and your people. We will then pray and call down the curse of God on every liar."

The Báb proposes several times therein²¹ that His questioner take this proof as decisive, which, if we believe in the "Bible", has always resulted in the confusion of those who negated the prophets.

We have said that the "Book of the Seven Proofs" could not have been written during the pilgrimage. Actually it was written on the mountain of Mah-Ku²² as is evident from the text that the Author was imprisoned there at the time He speaks. It might be argued however, that if He could foresee — as it is certain that He did²³ — the denouement²⁴ of the tragedy of which He was the principal hero, he could have known in advance the name of the place where the next to last act of His martyrdom would take place²⁵.

But, what is even more clear, is what He said in that place²⁶ about this Himself, on page forty-five²⁷:

See how the awaited Exalted One²⁸ manifested His truth before the eyes of the Muslims to open before them the way of salvation. He²⁹, the first effulgence of creation, He, the Mirror of God,

condescended to present Himself through the appearance of the Door Who conducts to the knowledge of the hidden descendant of Muhammad.³⁰ In His first book He spoke in the name of the laws of the Qur'án so that men would not be troubled by the new text and the new law; so that they could be convinced that this law is the equivalent of their own Book (the Qur'án), so that they do not remain in obscurity and comprehend at last that they were created for this very law. Meanwhile it is a question worthy of examination. (Although He presented Himself as the Door which conducts to the knowledge of the Imam Mahdi) He has encountered sectarians of the Qur'án who have not understood: and yet all are instructed in the promises of the sacred text. He who thrusts far from himself those who allow themselves to be guided by the imagination, he who confines himself to the clear limits of the Qur'anic law, that one is the wise one, that one lives in the kingdom of the good-pleasure of God, that one acts in accordance with true knowledge and walks upon the road which leads to the approbation of the Exalted One!!

The Báb hence identifies Himself here as the Imam Mahdi and rejects the title of Báb with which He had previously invested himself.

Furthermore, we learn from the Bábi historian, Agha Mirza Janí³¹ that Siyyid 'Alí Muhammad revealed this qualification during the last days of His imprisonment in Chihriq. Monsieur de Gobineau thus errs in placing this manifestation in Shiraz³² as he also errs elsewhere³³ when he adds "the title of Báb having become free was conferred upon Mulla Husayn Bushrui³⁴". This latter one, whom one names willingly] Awwal min amin (or the first believer, name under which he is already designated in the "Kitáb baynu'l-haramayn") receives the title of Báb'u'l-Báb.³⁵

It is on the other hand impossible that this book was written in Chihriq for the Báb would not have forgotten to speak of His change of residence. Finally, and we will explain it in our History³⁶, the revelation of the true title of the Apostle must have taken place not at the end, but at the start of His stay at Mah-Ku or even a little earlier. Objections would have presented themselves immediately and it is at this moment and to these objections that our Author responds.

His correspondent evidently asked Him for all of the proofs of His mission and the response which He received is admirable in its precision and in its clarity.³⁷ It is based upon two verses of the "Qur'án"³⁸ — according to the first nobody can produce verses, even should he have for collaborators all men and all demons — according to the second, nobody understands the meaning of the verses of the "Qur'án", except for God and the men of a solid knowledge.³⁹

Well, over the course of 1260 years, not one verse appeared, no man upon the surface of the earth emitted the claim to have caused such to descend from heaven, and here it is that someone presents Himself who "makes them descend" like a spring shower.

Of two things the first: either the "verse"⁴⁰ is of divine origin and the only proof of the mission of Muhammad — even as it is attested in the "Qur'án" — or it is a simple literary work, a suggestion which the "Qur'án" absolutely rejects.

There remains the first hypothesis, admitted as "certain truth" by all Muslims. Now, the Báb produces verses — divine creation — He is therefore sent by God, and it is from Him that He possesses his mission.

If you disclaim the validity of these verses, do not forget what your forefathers said of those of Muhammad when he presented them: "they are ancient fables cunningly arranged"⁴¹ What do they say today? What is left of their affirmations? What will be left of yours then?

"The verses can be comprehended by God only, and men of solid knowledge."⁴² Do you believe yourselves to be men of a solid knowledge?⁴³ To make such an affirmation is simple enough, to prove it, is everything. Prove to Me then your knowledge by explaining to Me the "Qur'án"...you cannot do so. Prove to Me that you are imbued with the true doctrine of the "Qur'án", that you are good among the good ones, pure among the pure, elect among the elect...the only proof that you are capable of giving is to submit yourselves to the immutable laws of God and to believe in His new revelation as you have believed in His previous revelations.

For God is One in His Self, as He is One in His Attributes, One in His works. Unique is the teaching which He gives to you since the origin of the ages, unique is He Whom He will give you in the time to come. And you seem to believe that you can learn nothing more. In your pride, you think that you know everything and you think you have responded in a sufficient fashion when to the least question you have answered, "Mystery". There is not, there could not be any "Mystery", but the teaching which is given to you is proportioned to your capacities. And it is the secret which I come to unveil to you, for your intelligence was not able to penetrate it, even though all the terms of the problem had been submitted to you. In the "Psalms"⁴⁴, God replies to David who asks Him why He created humanity: "Because I was a hidden treasure and that it pleased Me to be known". Is it then to know Him that one is stopped at every step by the "mystery" in the path which leads to Him? Is it then to know Him that one makes an angry and jealous God like the Jews, a God of battles like the Christians, a side-taking God like the Muslims, an anthropomorphic God like the immense majority of men? Is He thus a liar this God Whom you adore? Would He forget His promises this Creator before Whom all things bow down themselves? No not so! He has promised that you will know Him — and you will know Him, not all of a sudden, but by successive degrees. The "Professor" has not lacked in the performance of His task; He has come at diverse intervals, He has taught you the true law. Is it His fault that you have not recognized Him? As adorators of idols which you are, you have adored His body which is of no value, you were bent under His force when He was powerful, you were conquered by His sword when He made use thereof. But you have not been able to comprehend from whence 'They' came, Who 'They' were and Muhammad told you 'The Prophets, I am "Them"!!⁴⁵ For all of Them, whatever names They had, were but one and the same emanation from the Primal Will of God to be known, they are the very incarnation of the first creation of God and you have not understood this — you have remained Israelites without recognizing Moses in Jesus, Christians without perceiving Jesus in Muhammad; you wish to remain Muslims without seeing in Me Muhammad!

Corresponding to the progress which humanity has achieved, every prophet was sent with divers signs to prove His mission — material at first, these signs were elevated little by little towards immateriality. Adam shows you prodigies in teaching you to make use of the earth and fire, Noah teaches you the qualities of waves and wind, others instruct you in the arts and in industry, and when, forgetful of the origins of your instruction, you boast that you accomplish miracles, Moses presents himself, and he exceeds them⁴⁶ and destroys them with His rod. You advance in the sciences; you study your bodies and when finally you have, according to yourselves, penetrated the secret of death and that of life, Jesus comes Who, with His breath, makes of one dead a living one, of a living one a cadaver!⁴⁷

Your schools of philosophy are opened, literature becomes your domain, you elevate yourselves to the most sublime beauties of human genius, and Muhammad appears Who speaks to you the very language of God in its splendid and marvelous eloquence.

What more do you need and what more are you asking for? Do you believe you may submit God to your caprices? Have you forgotten the obedience that you owe to Him? Have you become the masters? You may believe this in your pride, but what would you think of Him if He should heed your bawlings? Believe, do not believe, how can this matter to His Majesty, to His Power, to His Sublimity? Will your

reasonings stop the forward march of the world? Scorn one another, calumniate, excommunicate each other. May each one of you, enclosed in the narrowness of His sect, cry with arrogance in His heart: "Multi enim vocati, pauci vero electi"⁴⁸ without comprehending that by that very thing he excludes himself from the company of the elect!

What is this that possesses the creature, and what madness leads him astray? Can He⁴⁹ not take a look at the past and bow down before the marvelous work of the Lord? What, these men, who after having ridiculed Muhammad have submitted themselves to the reign of His law, will not comprehend is that today they expell themselves from Islam. Brought up in the idea that the verses are the work of God, convinced of this eternal truth against which nothing prevails, now they turn away from the verses of the 'Bayán'.

This is, briefly summarized, the argument of the Báb in the first part of the "Book of the Seven Proofs". Fundamentally, the proof is one and thereafter He will finish by affirming that one must believe in His mission only because He proclaims it.

In the second part, He descends from these heights and consents to give certain explanations, not to prove His mission — for it proves itself — but to "reassure the heart" of those who hesitate upon the path and to give them arguments to oppose to their contradictors. He comments therein upon a certain number of "hadith".⁵⁰

I must point out that in addressing Himself to the Shi'ites, the Báb clashes not only with the "hadith" of the Arabian Prophet, but also with those of the Twelve Imams, and indeed the latter is an accumulated confusion of things of which nothing can give an idea.

He declares, what many people admit, that every "hadith" that is not in close connection with the "Qur'án" is false; and, by virtue of this fact, He rejects nine-tenths of them out of hand. He applies to those which remain the rules of Islamic scholarship⁵¹ which it would be too long to repeat here and retains only a small number of them relative to the quantity collected by Majlisi.⁵²

We will not follow Him in His discussion, but, with an example, to which He returns at every moment, we will attempt to grasp the profundity of His thought.

When Jesus Christ appeared, the Jews awaited the Messiah promised by the prophecies. These prophecies were of considerable number, obscure, contradictory, and it was incumbent upon the priests⁵³ of Moses to make the effort to study them and to explain them to others. They did not fail therein at all and we do not have any reason to suspect their good faith and their piety. On the contrary, it is by an excess of scruple that they refused to recognize Jesus — when they examined the mass of the prophecies concerning the coming of the divine messenger, they saw that these did not apply to the Person Who claimed⁵⁴ this title. For example it was not at all proven, for them, that Jesus was of the house of David.⁵⁵ It is thus through "reason" that they rejected the Messiah, but by human reason, that is to say what is powerless and confined. The Catholic Church, which rose up thereafter, treated as fables and as lies a large portion of these prophecies, and explained in a new and precise fashion certain other ones which the Jews obstinately did not comprehend in the sense in which they were explained.⁵⁶ Faithful to their traditions, entrenched in the confines of their religion, convinced of the truth of a body of knowledge which was nothing but a tissue of errors, the Jews, in good faith rejected Him Whom they awaited with such impatience.

Triumphant, Christians did not avoid falling into the same rut. Their zeal carried them away — they rejected, in treating them as apocryphal, certain writings which nonetheless contained the truth.

Convinced that they were on the good path, they explained that the "Counsellor" promised by Jesus was the Holy Spirit, and, with their eyes fixed upon the Gospels they awaited the end of the world, the last judgment, the return of Jesus in the clouds, without the least understanding of these words, "the Paraclete", "the last judgment", "the return of Jesus".

And when the promised "Ahmad"⁵⁷ came to proclaim His mission before the face of the world which awaited Him, they cried against Him, calling Him a blasphemer, a false prophet. The example of the Jews was of no service to them, for like them they turned full of blind rage against the new Apostle and opposed by violence and blood the propagation of His doctrine.

Alas, it would seem that this would suffice to open the eyes of humanity, and that it would be henceforth clear-seeing. Truly these battles, these hatreds, these horrors, these tortures should they not have ceased before the operation of evident reason? So many times tested, will man always fall once more into the same snare and will he wear out, through the obstinacy of His error the obstinacy of divine benevolence?

These Muslims in their turn take upon their shoulders the weight of all of the crimes of the past; these elect of God exert themselves to be the envy of one another in perdition. As the Jews did towards Jesus, as the Christians did in the case of Muhammad, they bark their blasphemies against the Báb, and once more, according to the strong expression of the Gospel⁵⁸, the dog returns to its vomit.

These examples from the past offer nothing consoling, but nevertheless humanity must not despair; the law of progress was inscribed upon its brow since its infancy and a day will come when universal brotherhood will no longer be a fruitless word.

As we see it, the argument of the Báb is new and original⁵⁹, and one can already, from this simple glimpse, realize the powerful interest which the reading of His literary work offers. The framework of this present work does not leave me at liberty to explain, even briefly, the principal teachings of a doctrine that is certainly bold and of which the appearance is surely brilliant and sympathetic. I hope to do so hereafter, but, for the moment, I have an observation to present regarding the "Boof of the Seven Proofs".

Towards the end of His work, the Báb speaks of the miracles which have accompanied His manifestation. This will no doubt astonish the reader, for he will have seen, in the course of His epistle, that our Apostle clearly negates the material miracles which the Muslim imagination attributes to Muhammad. He affirms that for Himself, as for the Arabian Prophet, the only proof of His mission is "the descent of verses". There are no others, not that He is incapable of producing miracles — for God doeth whatsoever He willeth — but simply because the "material prodigies" are inferior to the "immaterial miracles".

It seems to me that the explanation of this apparent contradiction is simple enough. The Báb, in addressing Himself to people imbued with the idea of miracles, speaks to them in their language and shows them that often what one calls a "prodigy" is nothing other than a coincidence. We will accustom ourselves hereafter to the ways the Báb has of expressing Himself and I hope thus to be confirmed in the opinion which I present here.

— Alphone Louis Marie Nicolas (1902)

The Seven Proofs

by **Haji Siyyid 'Alí Muhammad Shirazi**

(**The Báb**)

In the Name of God, the Only Unique, the Only Unique.⁶⁰ Praises be to God, for there is none other God but He, the Only Unique, the Only Unique. All splendor⁶¹ comes from God, upon the 'Man Yuzhiruhu'llah'⁶² and upon His Apostles even until the eternity of eternities.

And following:

We have examined the letter which was written to us: if one were to desire a detailed explanation of the proofs establishing the truth of this Manifestation⁶³, this one [such an explanation] would be too long and the tablets of the world of existence and of possibilities⁶⁴ would not be sufficient for this.⁶⁵ But, the essence of this discourse and the pearl of this aim⁶⁶ are that there never has been and there is now no doubt that the Eternal God has always been immovable in the Loftiness of His Divinity, in the sublimity of His Pure Attributes, and that He will remain always in the Splendor and the immutability of His Infinite Grandeur. Nothing has known Him as He should be known and the praises which have been made of Him have remained below Him. He is Pure of all names, Free from all semblances.⁶⁷ Everything is known to Him and His Grandeur resides in this that He remains unknown to all. His Creation has never had a commencement and will never have an end as then there would have been or there would be a necessary stoppage to [interruption in] His kindnesses.⁶⁸ All the times that it has been found useful in this world of Possibilities⁶⁹, He has sent Prophets and has made descend from the Heaven the Books of the Law: He will do so again when the need will make itself felt.⁷⁰

If you voyage in the Ocean of Names⁷¹, know that all is known to God. He is too elevated to be known to His creation or to be described by His creatures. Everything that you see was created by His will. And what proof must you have then of His Unity? His existence is the most complete proof of this, and the very existence of the exterior things is the most formal proof that they were created by Him. That is the philosophical proof for he who voyages upon the sea of the Truth.

If you sail upon the Ocean of Creation⁷², know that the first 'Dhikr'⁷³, which emanates from the Primal Will, is similar to the sun which God very High created following His Power, since the commencement for which there is no commencement, and, in every manifestation, it is this 'Dhikr' which He has shown following His own decision. Know therefore that this 'Dhikr' is comparable to the Sun⁷⁴ which God very High created following His Power, since the commencement for which there is no commencement: in every Manifestation, it is this First Dhikr which He has shown following His own decision.⁷⁵ Know therefore, that in this sense, He is like the Sun. Indeed, this star, if it rises until the end that will never have an end, will be, even as it has been in the past, but one only and the same sun. But, it is equally [the same for] Him Who was manifested in all the prophets and it is He Who speaks in all their books. There has not been a commencement because the commencement has its origin in Him Who is the Commencement, and there will be no end for Him because the end resolves itself in Him Who is the End. It is He Who, in this new revolution of the world 13,000 years old⁷⁶, is known under the name of

"Nuqtih-Bayán".⁷⁷ In the first evolution He was known under the name Adam, then under that of Noah in the epoch of this prophet; He was Abraham in His time, then Jesus, then Muhammad Rasu'l-Allah. Finally He is Him Whom God shall make manifest after Him Whom God shall make manifest in His epoch. Here is the explanation of the secret contained in the word of the Prophet of God:⁷⁸ "The Prophets, that's Me."⁷⁹ Yes, in all shined and shine now and always but one only and the same sun.⁸⁰ That is also the explanation of the "Hadith" relative to the Imam Mahdi⁸¹ and in which Imam Ja'afar as-Sadiq⁸² said:

O Creature, if you want to see Adam and Seth⁸³ (look at me) me I am Adam and Seth; if you want to see Noah and His son Shem, me I am Noah and His son Shem; if you want to see Abraham and Ishmael, me I am Abraham and Ishmael; if you want to see Moses and Joseph, me I am Moses and Joseph; if you want to see Jesus and Shimon⁸⁴, I am Jesus and Shimon; if you want to see Muhammad and the Amir of the Faithful⁸⁵, me I am Muhammad and the Amir of the Faithful; if you want to see Hasan⁸⁶ and Husayn⁸⁷, me I am Hasan and Husayn; if you want to see the Twelve Imams⁸⁸ from the descendancy of Husayn, me I am the Twelve Imams from the descendancy of Husayn, upon him be blessing! Respond to my question! And in truth, I have given you an announcement which has never been given to you until the present...

and [in] this way until the end of the "Hadith". But, he does not say: "I am similar to them" — (he says, I am they themselves) — for everything that was in them was in him, and all that is in their books is from him.

The essence of this discourse is this that God, in His sublime wisdom, gave the Qur'án as proof of the Mission of Muhammad. That was a gift which He had never made in likeness to any nation before Muhammad, such, that a single one of its verses is a sufficient proof⁸⁹ for all those who are upon the earth. The impossibility in which all are found to cause to descend one verse alone from the Heaven is a proof of the Power of God. Since the day of the descent of the Qur'án until that of the manifestation of the "Nuqtih-Bayán" there have elapsed 1270 years⁹⁰ during which the creatures were instructed in this same proof and this, so that they might be inclined, as soon as He should manifest Himself anew, to turn themselves towards the Sun of Truth.⁹¹ Following their own beliefs⁹², the Book surpasses everything that could be said besides this proof: but, that which surpasses suffices, besides that which is inferior to it.⁹³ To repeat what remains below this fruit [the Book] is without any utility to the perspicacious wiseman. I do not speak in this way to you except in the case where otherwise I would abandon you to what you have learned from elsewhere and in which I would dissimulate with you in argument: in the opposite[contrary] case, everything that I tell you being evident, it is for you to find proof of the opposite⁹⁴; but you can not think for a single instant that the verse is not a miracle superior to those of all the Prophets: no, by God, it has surpassed them and will surpass them always.

In this Book I make known to you seven irrefutable proofs⁹⁵ of which each one would be sufficient, by itself, as a definitive argument in the eyes of every equitable man.

FIRST PROOF

If the verses of the Qur'án were not superior to the miracles of all the prophets, how could those miracles have been abrogated by these ones? How is it that alone, the Qur'án could have remained? That is a strong and perfect proof that this proof is superior (to the miracles accomplished by) the rod of Moses or other antecedent miracles of the preceding manifestations.⁹⁶

SECOND PROOF

With the religion which you profess, you can not find any escape. Indeed, following what is written in the Qur'án, you say: "Besides God, no person can cause (to descend from heaven) verses (such) that one can say they come from God."⁹⁷ If a creature could have produced such, one certainly would have produced them during this period of one thousand two hundred and seventy years. The incapacity of the creatures thus seems to you, up until now, very evident. Therefore, remark how perfect is the goodness of God for all those who accept the Qur'án, for it has closed, for them, the doors of doubt. Indeed, at the very moment that they see verses (they must accept them), for it can not come to their spirit [the thought or feeling] that they come from another than God. Furthermore, it is said in the Qur'án that no person can create even a "hadith"⁹⁸. Hence, a sincerely pious and believing man can not allow entry into His heart the thought that the verses of my "Bayán"⁹⁹ come from another one but God.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps, the pen would refuse its service to such a work, for finally, it is impossible to realize [become real] for a Muslim, how much moreso, and I ask pardon from God for this supposition, for a man who rejects Islam.

I vow by the Pure Attributes of God! The divine blessing was perfect for all those who believe in the Qur'án for if anyone wishes to reflect[remember] well[profoundly] on that which testifies to the (divine) truth of this Book, (which is to say the verses), he can not do otherwise than to admit to the celestial emanation of no matter what verse of my "Bayán". How could he doubt? How could he not be convinced? Be candid, what difference is there between the day that you knew yourself and in which you entered into Islam by means of the Evidence of the Qur'án, and the day in which you saw the "Bayán" — in which you did not want to believe?

You did not see Muhammad, that is evident: you do not see of [from] Him any miracle except for the Qur'án. And so, if it is without understanding anything about it that you have embraced your religion, why have you embraced it? If, on the contrary, it is with intelligence that you have chosen it, what difference can there be between the moment in which you saw the Qur'án, in which you have been convinced of the powerlessness of every man to make a similar book, in which finally you have accepted the Muslim religion, and the moment in which you examined the "Bayán" without being able to be convinced (of its divinity)? Truly is it necessary that God give you another Proof?¹⁰¹ When He will ask you: "For what reason did you embrace the Muslim religion?" would you have another argument to invoke besides the Qur'án? It is thereupon verily that God confirms His testimony.

And so, even as you embraced the religion of the Arabic Prophet, by means of His book, you should have, in the same fashion, given your faith to the "Nuqtih-Bayán". For finally, once again, you did not see Muhammad and nevertheless you believed in His book: from then on, in the same fashion you should have, after having seen a verse of the "Bayán", believed in all of its verses as you believed in those of the Qur'án. God has sent no Prophet who distributes a book issuing from Him as proof of His mission: that is a point particular to the "Nuqtih-Bayán", that if He presents verses to a Muslim, these verses are, as of the essence of the Qur'án itself, a complete and perfect proof for this Muslim. Yes, the sight alone of but one of these verses (suffices) for those who have the intelligent and perspicacious eye: for the others, I do not speak of them, for they are not worthy of a similar attention, God having said in the greater part of the Manifestations that these signs are for those who have Faith and Intelligence and not for the great majority of the creatures, who are not in a state to comprehend.¹⁰²

These are two of the seven proofs that I give you, they depend one upon the other. The first is thus that

the verses are superior to all the miracles of all of the prophets, the second is that God alone has the power to cause to descend verses from heaven. See how God tests His creatures!¹⁰³ If He had given to the 'Nuqtih-Bayán' the rod which He delivered to Moses, not one of those who believe in the Qur'án would have remained in doubt, all would have believed. And here that God gave to Him a sign superior to this rod, following the very religion of the Muslims and the testimony of their book: any many of the creatures were tested and withdrew themselves all of a sudden. This derives from their lack of religion and of investigation in their own religion, for the sight alone or the audition alone of a single verse surpasses the greatest of all the miracles of the prophets.

THIRD PROOF

The Proof of the Divine Power proceeds continuously from the verses. Do not think that it is an easy work (to produce such); their creation is more marvelous than that of the creatures of heaven, of the earth and of that which is between them.

Refer yourself simply to the letters of the alphabet. Everyone uses them to speak and God manifested them from a man who had not frequented the schools. Nobody, upon the surface of the globe could present a similar creation for it is no other than the manifestation of the divine Power¹⁰⁴ and it is a sign without mixture of His grandeur. But the creatures live in a perishable world and they cannot pause at the sublimity and at the magnificence of the verses: they do not see except for their own nature and cannot attain to the loftiness of this testimony that will subsist until the day of judgment.¹⁰⁵

FOURTH PROOF

The verses and the Book are superior to no matter what miracle, in such manner that, for the Muslim, there is no other way but to believe in this superiority which God Himself has affirmed in the Surah of the Spider¹⁰⁶:

Does it not suffice them that We have sent you the Book of which you recite to them verses! Certainly there is in this a proof of the mercy of God and notification for all men who believe. [Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book for their instruction? Surely in this there is a blessing and an admonition to true believers.]

The greater part of the passages of the Qur'án respond to the frivolous demands which were made of the Prophet of God. For example, it is said in the Surah of the Night Journey¹⁰⁷:

They say: we will not believe you, unless you cause to gush from the earth a source of living water. Or at least that you have a garden planted with palm trees and with vines and that you cause to gush torrents from the midst of this garden. Or at least that a fragment of the sky fall upon us, or at least that you bring God and the angels as guarantors of your words. Or at least that you have a house ornamented with gilt, or at least that you rise to the heaven: we would not believe nonetheless that you had risen up, except if you caused to descend a book that all of us would be able to read.

Reply to them: by the glory of my Lord! Am I something other than a man and an envoy?

[They say: "We will not believe in you until you make a spring gush from the earth before our very

eyes, or cause rivers to flow in a grove of palms and vines; until you cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you have threatened to do, or bring down God and the angels in our midst; until you build a house of gold, or ascend to heaven; nor will we believe in your ascent until you have sent down for us a book which we can read."

Say: "Glory to my Lord! Surely I am no more than an apostle made of flesh and blood."]

And so, now, reply to me candidly. What difference is there between these Arabs and you who (like them), demand everything that comes into your head? If you imagine that the slave¹⁰⁸ can do whatever he wishes, you deceive yourself. This power is in the hand of God. If it had been in the hands of the slave there would not have remained a single infidel upon the surface of the globe, for the believers for whom all the hopes would have been realized (by their Prophet) would have believed in Him. I take refuge in God! If you accept as proof that which God Himself has established as such, if you believe in Him and seek to satisfy Him, then how can you wish to bring to Him the proof of your faith based upon grounds which do not please Him and cannot please Him: He forbade this in the Surah of the Bee to the slaves who do not believe in the verses¹⁰⁹:

Certainly, God does not direct at all those who do not believe in His verses: a cruel chastisement is reserved for them. Those who do not believe in the verses of God commit an untruth, they are liars. [God will not guide those who disbelieve God's revelations. Grievous punishment awaits them. None invents falsehoods save those who disbelieve God's revelations: they alone are the liars.]¹¹⁰

Pay good attention to this: in each manifestation it is precisely on this point¹¹¹ where the greater part of the creatures lose their way, who mistake the direction and go from the Paradise of Faith to the hell of irreligion. Know well that He from whom the Proof was attested, comes from God. This suffices as proof, even as God says so, in the Qur'án, by the mouth of Moses¹¹²:

We come to you with a sign from your Lord: may peace be upon him who follows the straight path. [We have come to you with a revelation from your Lord: blessed is he that follows the right guidance.]

If the proof of Moses and of Aaron against Pharaoh had not been perfect in a single sign, God would not have affirmed that in this verse. You see from now on that a single verse suffices to prove a mission.

FIFTH PROOF

God, according to the Qur'án, did not give another proof of the mission of Muhammad other than that which follows from the verses.¹¹³ It is thus [for this reason] that He says in the Surah of the Night Journey¹¹⁴:

Say: when men and geniies unite to produce something similar to this Qur'án, they would produce nothing like it, even if they were to mutually assist each other. [Say: "If men and jinn combined to write the like of this Koran, they would surely fail to compose the like, though they helped one another as best they could."]

These miracles of which one speaks today in the books relative to the Prophet, if they had whatsoever

value, God would have made of them the proof of the mission of His envoy — even if it is spoken of in the Qur'án, it is no less true that God did not make of it the "testimony" of the mission of Muhammad. For example¹⁵:

The moon was cleft in two. [The moon was cleft in two.]

God alone knows what this verse means even as it is written in another place¹⁶:

There is but God that knows the interpretation of this and the men of stalwart science. [and none knows its interpretation, save only God, and those firmly rooted in knowledge.]

SIXTH PROOF

With you I do not discuss except in relying upon the testimony of reason.

If someone wishes today to embrace the Muslim religion, is the divine testimony complete for him, yes or no? If you say no, then, after death, how could God chastise this someone? During His life, how could one reproach him for not being a Muslim? If you say yes, why yes? If it is simply because you affirm it that you believe it, that is really not an argument; but if you say: "yes, by the Qur'án" then you are reasonable and you give a solid and irrefutable argument.

Would you now cast a glance upon the manifestation of the "Bayán". If one of those who believe in the Qur'án wished to reason in its favor as he would do so with him that one who is against the Islamic religion, nobody would remain in opposition and all would find salvation in the day of judgment.¹⁷ Indeed, if a Christian says: "Me, I understand nothing in the Qur'án, how can it be a testimony for me?" — that is a rationale that does not merit a moment's attention. And so, that is [also] the case with the adorers of the Qur'án who say: we do not understand the eloquence of the verses of the "Bayán", which can not therefore be a testimony for us. To the man who speaks this way one has only to reply: "O ignorant one, how is it that you became a Muslim? You did not see the Prophet, you did not see the miracles: if it is without understanding that you so became, why did you become one? Did you become so [a believer] upon the confession made to you of the masters of science and knowledge of their powerlessness (to produce verses) or are you humble and submissive because of the innate dispositions deposited in you which made you hear the word of God — which is one of the signs of the love of science¹⁸ — then, for you the proof remains complete. From now on, because beforehand you acted following your soul, act the same way today in that which concerns the "Bayán".

SEVENTH PROOF

Following the universal belief, God knew, knows, could and can do all. Also when someone presents himself saying that he comes by His leave and brings an evident testimony, if God does not manifest anyone to render to nothingness His affirmations, it is a proof that he really comes from Him and that he is beloved. By this even, if God is consensual and if despite His All-Powerfulness He has raised up no adversary, He demonstrates thereby that the Prophet was sent by Him and that He is pleasing to Him.¹⁹

Here is what I recommend to you in that which concerns the "Bayán". For each manifestation, please remain, in that which concerns it, on the terrain of the evidences of that manifestation. Do not lose your way, outside of the ways of fitness and of sincerity.

For example, in the case of Muhammad, God wished to prove the veracity of His mission by the verses. If you are a man of faith, discuss upon the foundation that serves as the support of His mission¹²⁰ and not based upon questions that will cause you to enter upon another terrain which, moreover, Muhammad did not propose to you: you cannot discuss them upon this basis.¹²¹ All of the odes which the Arabs composed at the start of the mission of the Prophet, did they bear fruit?¹²² Their authors wanted through them to oppose the Prophet! But it was incumbent upon them to produce not odes, but verses similar to His. Note that in whatever Manifestation there has been and will be no other way for men endowed with science and intelligence¹²³, and that moreover, in final analysis this will give rise to remorse, for the Testimony of the Manifestation remains while all that is opposed to Him subsides, for it emanates from the creature and is thus impotent¹²⁴. The Testimony subsists, and nothing remains of the opposition.

But do you think that prison can prevail against the Testimony? Among the Prophets, Joseph was imprisoned¹²⁵, and among the chosen ones, Musa ibn Ja'far¹²⁶. Both of them, were they not sent from God? Nothing that is directed to the destruction of the Testimony can be invoked as proof (against Him). You know the story, and know what happened at 'áshúra'¹²⁷ and to the Siyyid of the Siyyids.¹²⁸ Neither of them were Prophets. I do not tell you all of this except to make you reflect thereupon.

When you say: "My conscience is not convinced, otherwise I would become a believer" know, that in your conscience, what you say is a pure error, for you have no proof to back you up.¹²⁹ *Examine the people of David¹³⁰. This people was brought up during five hundred years with the rules of the Zabur¹³¹ to such a degree that finally it arrived at perfection in this religion. Then Moses was manifested. When He appeared, some of the followers of the Zabur believed in Him, while the others rejected Him. And so the two camps both believed their consciences to be right, and to be sure, neither one nor the other was motivated by an intention to blaspheme the Lord. It is exactly the same with you. You do not desire to stand against God either, perhaps on the contrary you search for certitude only to find the true Faith. Imagine for a moment that you are one of the people of David – if they had thought that Moses was truly the Prophet predicted by the Zabur, all, without exception, would have believed in the truth of His mission and not a single one would have remained a disbeliever.*

Lend your attention for a moment upon this point: from the day of the Manifestation of Moses until that of today, 2270 years¹³² have transpired. But there still exist in our epoch people for whom religion is based on the Zabur and who imagine themselves to be in the path of God. This claim on their part is without value in the eyes of the Jews. What can it be worth in the eyes of God?

If we examine the people of Moses, we can attest to the same phenomenon. During one thousand years¹³³, this people was raised in the Mosaic religion and it arrived finally at perfection therein. And then everything that Moses promised them regarding the Manifestation of Jesus took place.¹³⁴ A small number from among them believe in the Son of Mary. The rest, despite their sincere efforts to follow the ways of God and to believe in the utterances of Moses, have not attained certitude¹³⁵ and thus have remained stationary, still awaiting the Messiah. What value does this action have in the eyes of the Christians? How much less value does it have in the eyes of God!

Let us pass to the Christian nation. During five hundred years¹³⁶ it was raised in His law as its ancestors had been in that of Moses. When it arrived at perfection in its religion, God raised up Muhammad Rasul Allah¹³⁷. Jesus had, in a very precise way¹³⁸ ordained that His nation should believe in Him when He would manifest Himself. This plan of action had moreover been followed by all of the Prophets, for no one of

them has appeared Who did not command His people to believe in the Prophet Who would succeed Him. But you know perfectly well what happened after the appearance of Muhammad. It reached such a point that He cried out: "No Prophet has been tormented as I have." And yet, all those who walked in the ways of God in that epoch, that is, the Christians, were awaiting His appearance. Night and day they prayed in hope of being among the number of those who would recognize Him and attract the hearts of all men to Him. But when He appeared, nobody believed in Him, except for the Amir al-Mu'minin¹³⁹ and a few rare persons; and yet the universe lived only for His sake!¹⁴⁰

There is a secret here that I am going to teach you, for you have never heard it spoken of before.

Examine the people of all the Prophets. The origin of their practices is in the utterances of their Prophet. It follows that these actions are done for Him. But as the Prophet is the Mirror of God¹⁴¹, one can see nothing in it but God. Hence, these actions are all for God and uniquely for Him.

Now, even as the origin and actions of every nation derive their first cause from its Prophet, in the same way they converge towards the following Prophet.¹⁴² In this way, in the day of the appearance of Muhammad the world was uniquely preoccupied with Him, but all did not recognize that He had appeared, for if they had they would not have remained separated from their Friend.¹⁴³ Take a look at this shoe which is believed to come from the foot of the donkey of Jesus. What importance is given to it, and how the Christians go in large numbers on pilgrimage to see it¹⁴⁴ — it is by this means that they seek to bring themselves closer to God! A Prophet like Muhammad appears and for seven years nobody wants to believe in Him!¹⁴⁵ See the entire balance of human actions! And meanwhile these Christians if they had been able to attain certitude that this Prophet was indeed the promised Ahmad¹⁴⁶, not a single one among them would have remained alienated from Muhammad. There are among them people of an incontestable knowledge who fasted and mortified themselves in order to please God. Then, when Him for Whom they have acted this way appeared, they said to Him, "You are not Him Whom Jesus promised us."

Do not think that these people were not attentive in their religion, or that they did not want to believe. Perhaps, on the contrary, their lack of certitude and of faith comes precisely from their too great religious scruples. They believed themselves to be following the path of God, but certainly, if they could have attained the conviction that Muhammad was truly the Prophet of God promised by Jesus, all of them would have accepted Him in the blink of an eye. You will remark that in truth their claim has no value in the eyes of the Muslims, and what worth can it have in the sight of the Creator, of His Prophet, and of the witnesses¹⁴⁷ of His religion! Their actions do not attain their aim and are without value although they truly believe themselves to be acting in accordance with the good-pleasure of God.

There were only, according to History, seventy conversions of Christians¹⁴⁸ to the Faith of Muhammad. The fault for this failure falls upon their religious leaders¹⁴⁹, for if these had believed, they would have been followed by the mass of their nation. See then what happens. The Christian wise men are wise by virtue of their safeguarding the doctrine of Christ, and yet here we see that they are themselves the cause of the creatures not acquiring Faith and finding Salvation. Go then and learn¹⁵⁰. The entire nation of Jesus obeys its religious chiefs with the aim of finding salvation at the day of Last Judgment, and this obedience has conducted it straight to the fire of hell, for at the appearance of Muhammad it did not understand that this was the promised Prophet. From that time on, one could be the disciple of a wise man, or better yet, be neither a wise man nor the disciple of a blind wise man, for both of these two will perish in the day of Last Judgment. Be a clear-seeing wise man¹⁵¹, and observe in each nation millions of blinded people (of which a small number) find a little clear-sightedness (at the time of the Manifestation). Have a little pity on

yourself and do not turn away from the proofs and arguments (which are presented to you). Do not replace them with such as are products of your imagination; be contented with those which God Himself has fixed. Know that being a wise man is not a glory, no more than being the disciple of a wise man. A learned man is not a glory, no more than the disciple of a learned man. To the learned man, knowledge is glorious¹⁵² if it is approved by God. And the disciple of this learned man is following the true path when His obedience (to His master) is agreeable to God. Do not follow your imaginations about what can be agreeable to God: it is nothing other than faith in His Prophet.

Let us return to the nation of Christ. Every Christian has sought the approbation of God, while not one has sought the approbation of Muhammad, which was nonetheless the very source of divine approbation. I said not a single one, but I make exception for the seventy Christians who believed in the apostle¹⁵³. From the appearance of Jesus until that of the Nuqtih-i-Bayán, 1770 years have passed¹⁵⁴ and today still the Christians imagine themselves to be walking in the ways of the Lord, while only seventy individuals about whom I have already spoken have acted in a fashion approved by God. All the others think they are agreeable to their Lord, and how far they are from this!

Do not believe that it is through intelligence and perspicacity that they follow the rules of their religion. Perhaps it must be said that any individual born in whatever religion becomes attached to following the precepts in the midst of which he was brought up. Do you ever see a Christian become a Muslim, or at least it is very rare, or a Muslim become a Christian, which is impossible?¹⁵⁵ You are perhaps happy to be born in a religion that comes from God, for it could be that you do not have the requisite insight to recognize the truth. You must acquire this insight, for he who does not have the grace of God does not have clear-sightedness.

You see, 1270 years have elapsed from the appearance of Muhammad until the beginning of the Manifestation of the Bayán and all (the Muslims) have lived in anticipation of the appearance of the hidden Mahdi¹⁵⁶ which Muhammad predicted in saying¹⁵⁷:

“If nothing remained of the world but one day, God would lengthen the duration of this day until He raises up a Man from among My children the name of Whom will be Mine own.”

The foundation of Islam is the word of the Prophet, and it is right that it should return to Him¹⁵⁸. So God manifested the Báb by according Him the same testimony which He had accorded Muhammad, so that not one of the followers of the Qur’án should retain a doubt on His account. Indeed, it is said in the Holy Book that no one other than God has the power to make verses descend¹⁵⁹.

Now the Muslims are witnesses that during 1270 years nobody has appeared who produces verses, and now, it is with this testimony that He Who was promised and Whom men awaited was manifested by God. He was manifested from a place which nobody imagined, in the person of an individual nobody would have thought of, not having attained twenty-five years¹⁶⁰, and of a rank which one does not have the custom of honoring amongst the great intellects of Islam.

Glory then comes to each according to His knowledge. Now see upon what the glory of the 'ulama rests — upon the interpretation of divine verses. God has assigned an elevated rank to this interpretation of verses for He says: "Only God and he who is endowed with sound knowledge comprehends the meaning of the Qur’án."¹⁶¹

And see that it is through the intermediary of a young man of twenty-five years, ignorant of all learning, that He manifests His verses! If the learned of Islam seek to acquire glory through the interpretation of the sacred text, this young man affirms His knowledge by the very production of verses. Hence there should not be any hesitation for these learned men in recognizing Him.

Furthermore, the Qur'án descended from the heavens in the space of twenty-three years¹⁶² while God has endowed the Báb with such a force and power that if He so wishes, He can, in the space of five days and five nights without interruption, cause as many verses to descend as the Holy Book contains¹⁶³. Tell me, is this power peculiar to the Báb, or did any of His predecessors have this faculty¹⁶⁴?

Following the interpretation of the verses (of the Qur'án), glory comes from the aptitude to produce spontaneous orations in praise of God. You have seen in the "Misbah al-Sha'riah"¹⁶⁵ what His Highness Sadiq¹⁶⁶ said about the pre-eminence of these orations¹⁶⁷:

"There is not in this world of possibilities a higher rank for the servant of God than to be the possessor of inspiration for spontaneous orations."

And God has manifested from the Báb spontaneous orations without number and such that the most eloquent, confused thereby, do not dare to seat themselves in His shadow to compose their like. See the secret of unity: God did not give anyone the power in six hours to make thousands of verses of this kind flow from His pen, until it was demonstrated (that the Báb did so)¹⁶⁸. See, is there in the Muslim religion a higher rank than the one for the person who is inspired with spontaneous orations?

See after this the khutbih¹⁶⁹ (of the Báb) and the immense knowledge with which He wrote commentaries on the Qur'án, with the same technical terms used by the 'ulama. So much so did He that finally people of a high rank were attracted to Him¹⁷⁰ and those who were gifted with intelligence did not hesitate for a second to believe in Him¹⁷¹.

Now, if you wish to think about it carefully, you will see that this Manifestation is by itself a clear testimony, a complete proof. In effect, Muhammad, Who revealed the verses, lived over forty years among the Arabs. But the Báb has produced verses of the same value, spontaneous orations, khutbih, many prayers for pilgrimage, Arabic and Persian works of such a kind that a man of intelligence cannot but confirm that they emanate from God. Make it a test — the learned of Islam, after sixty years of work, if they wish to write a page in Arabic, are obliged to weigh the value of each word and the rules of grammar. Can one compare their works to the sacred text? If they write a khutbih, they do so by borrowing the very words of the family of the Prophet. The technical terms of the Arabic language have never made and do not make the glory of anyone. Nevertheless God took the care to manifest the Báb completely ignorant of this science (before the manifestation) so that they whole world could be convinced (today) that (in Him) it comes from God and does not come from study. To acquire the knowledge of Arabic is indispensable in order to understand the Book of God. Besides this, what use is it? But the Power from Whom the verses flow, what need has It of this knowledge?

In themselves the sciences are not of absolute necessity. This can be said for the ruler and the compass, for the subject and the complement. There is among these points not one difference. You certainly see in so obvious a fashion that these arts are acquired and issue forth from knowledge, that I do not have to dwell upon this subject.

See how widespread in the world is astrology, on the subject of which the Prophet said¹⁷²:

"The astrologers have told lies, I swear this by the God of the Kaaba."

It is at the point now that every great person has an astrologer in His service!¹⁷³

Religious science? It is acquired for a fraudulent purpose and occupies itself powerfully little with God! It is the functionaries of the government who heap honors and dignities upon the 'ulama. If these doctors came from God, what need would they have of the meddling of functionaries in the rules of their religion? All of this comes from the weakness of men who have forgotten the vision of the Grandeur and Power of the Eternal God.

See how the awaited Highness¹⁷⁴ manifested His truth before the very eyes of Muslims in order to pen for them the day of salvation. He¹⁷⁵, the first radiation of Creation and the Mirror of God, He condescended to present Himself in the appearance of the "Door which conducts to the knowledge of the hidden descendent of Muhammad"¹⁷⁶. In His first book¹⁷⁷, He spoke in the name of the laws of the Qur'an so that men would not be troubled by the New Text and the New Law, so that they could become convinced that this text and this law are in relation to their own Book, so that they would not remain in obscurity, and would comprehend that they had been created for this very law. Here is a question always worthy of examination: (even though He presented Himself as the Door which conducts to the knowledge of the Imam Mahdi) there are followers of the Qur'an who did not understand, and notwithstanding that all had been instructed in the promises of the sacred Text. The one who, pushing far away from himself those¹⁷⁸ who allow themselves to be guided by their imagination, who restricts himself to the clear limits of the Shari'ah¹⁷⁹, that one is a learned man who lives in the kingdom of the good-pleasure of God, who acts according to true knowledge and walks upon the path conducting to the approbation of the Highness¹⁸⁰. He walks upon the earth of true glory, the blessed way of salvation. If all, at the start of this manifestation, had found the way of salvation, they would have been saved on the Day of Judgment saghir¹⁸¹, which is the Day of the Manifestation of His Highness. And furthermore! It is for the creature that this benediction has issued forth! And it does not produce any effect! The Pen remains stupefied when it must write all that has been seen from these men¹⁸²! It is not for me to inscribe word for word everything that has transpired from the beginning to the end of the manifestation¹⁸³. Soon the attentive 'ulama and the sincere philosophers will honor themselves by ascending their pulpits and in their classrooms to explain My words, exactly as you see them today honored to interpret the words of Muhammad. Yet, when this Prophet appeared, what did they not say on His account! However¹⁸⁴,

Glory to God! He is exalted by an immense height above the calumniators.

This verse is applied to this Highness¹⁸⁵ and signifies that He is exalted above whatever those ones can say who do not believe in Her. Today, the one who glances at the sea and the abyss of the Unity¹⁸⁶, the Ocean and the infinity of the Eternity¹⁸⁷, will see that He is above all these immensities, for the Mirror of God has remained, from all eternity, beyond the reach of human praise (What traces then could be left by the blasphemies of the impious? He is pure of the descriptions of those who wish to describe Him; how could He not be from the malevolent insinuations of His enemies?), while all have been created to contemplate God.¹⁸⁸ But this does not mean to contemplate the Eternal Person of God, for it can not be seen by the creatures. To see God, is to see Him in the Person of His Prophet through Whom He can be seen. This is what this verse means¹⁸⁹:

It is God Who elevated the heavens without visible columns and Who has established Himself upon the throne. He has subordinated the sun and the moon, and each one of these stars pursues its course until a determined point. He manages the affairs of the universe and causes His marvels to be seen distinctly. Perhaps you will finish by believing with certitude that one day you will be in the presence of your Lord.

You see from hereon that heaven and earth were certainly created so that you contemplate God. All were truly created for this purpose, and all, night and day, pursue it. But their pious acts have their foundation and their origin in the Prophet, and must of necessity focus on the contemplation of God¹⁹⁰, for otherwise these acts will not give a single fruit to those who accomplish them. Reflect a little upon this contemplation of God for which all have been created. It is actually the mountain of Mah-Ku which is the Seat thereof⁹¹. All ask for it, and all have remained absent from it; all are occupied with it, and yet nobody has known it. All the proofs that I have given you are limited.¹⁹² But you can see that His Highness¹⁹³ said, in the "Khutbih-i-Tamimiyih"¹⁹⁴:

"You ask how one can recognize Him? In truth, all present things demonstrate Him: they proclaim His proofs and His signs, and His existence proves Itself.¹⁹⁵"

And yet, there even, nothing can be a sufficient proof for knowing Him: perhaps He is known by Himself.¹⁹⁶ That is what the words of Sajjad¹⁹⁷ mean in the prayer known under the name "Abi Hanza Semali"¹⁹⁸:

"It is by Thee that I have known Thee, and it is Thee Who led me unto Thee. It is Thou who called me to Thee, and if Thou wert not, when could I have known Thee?"

All, during the period of the ghaybat¹⁹⁹ were searching for happiness²⁰⁰, and when it appeared, all remained in obscurity. Would you believe by chance that this joy of the Manifestation resides in sovereignty? In military power? In empire? Since the epoch of the Prophet until our days, God knows how many powerful kings have been found in Islam who awaited the manifestation of God and ardently hoped for the coming of this joy! Today still seven powerful sovereigns²⁰¹ hold the world in awaiting the coming of the promised Manifestation. Glory be to God! Not one has heard of His appearance, and if they have been informed, not one has given Him His credit. Perhaps they will leave this low world full of their desire and without understanding that the One Whom they awaited had appeared. This is what happened to the monarchs in the Evangel — they awaited the arrival of the Prophet of God and when He appeared they failed to recognize Him.

See how these sovereigns spend money, without even thinking to name a functionary charged with making them aware of the Manifestation of God in their own realm! They would fulfill in this way the purpose for which they were created.²⁰² All of their desires have tended and tend only to leave behind them traces of their names! May God in His mercy and His goodness accord salvation to all Who are His servants.

Know that God has not fulfilled His promise as long as "the earth has not been filled with injustices and iniquities."²⁰³ You have read this yourself²⁰⁴:

"The earth will be full of justice and equity after having been full of violence and iniquity."

It is also written in the hadith of Ibn 'Abbas²⁰⁵, in the book entitled "Ahvan"²⁰⁶:

"The Prophet said: "The Mahdi will be of My descendants and will fill the surface of the earth with justice and equity even as it was full of violence and iniquities."

Elsewhere, Muhammad said²⁰⁷:

"If there is left in this lower world nothing but a single day, God will augment the duration of this day until He raises up a man of My race whose name shall be Mine."

Salman asked Him then²⁰⁸: "O Prophet of God, from which of your children will this Highness issue forth?" Placing His hand upon the elbow of the Imam Husayn, the Prophet replied: "From this child."

"See: the Qur'an having descended upon the earth, all the Muslims believe in all that it contains, without feeling the least suspicion, without experiencing the least doubt. But truly, at the moment in which the Manifestation appears, it seems that the creature metamorphoses himself into another — nobody believes and if by chance someone does believe, His weakness inhibits him from being convinced. From your birth until this day, you have had faith in everything that was revealed in the Qur'an. Never have you brought up a single doubt, and never do you now bring up a single doubt, and never have you found him who could destroy your belief. How can it be then that today, after having seen yourself, you do not believe? If you have perspicacity, tell me — what difference is there²⁰⁹? The believer is no longer a believer if, in the epoch of the Manifestation he is no different from what he was during the epoch of the ghaybat²¹⁰, and if during the qaibet he is not as he was during the day of the Manifestation²¹¹. It is in this that the equilibrium of faith resides, for it is in this way that knowledge is profitable, while outside of this it is without utility. Survey the terrain of the Islamic Faith. You see in it Muslims seeking to please God; and when He in Whom God is pleased manifests Himself, not one — except those who have given Him their faith — seeks to make himself acceptable to Him. That is the true significance of the hadith, and not what has been understood of it heretofore.²¹²

From the beginning of His life, the learned man strives to comprehend the Cause in a manner that pleases God, and to act in conformity with this Cause. He writes more than 50,000 lines of jurisprudence or of methodology trying to understand or to make understood by others by ahadith of the Prophet, and when the Testimony manifests Himself with major proofs, this learned one diminishes the sum of His faith relative to what it was before.²¹³ Indeed, these verses of the Prophet, he interpreted them in appearance, but he did not comprehend them in substance. You then that His sincerity, and the efforts he made in [service to His] religion did nothing to elevate His rank, but, on the contrary, they lowered it before God and the Masters of the True Knowledge²¹⁴, while the unfortunate one imagines himself to have remained faithful to the fear of God. It is not that he desires to contemplate the appearance of God, to be thereafter in obscurity. Perhaps it is for him as it was for the learned men of preceding religions — according to them, the commandments of God were fulfilled. They also persisted in their religions, although the family of Muhammad made so many efforts for their salvation. It is with this purpose that all of these ahadith were produced, those of which the foundation is certain, and which even say: "There will remain (at the moment of the Manifestation) only us and our companions."²¹⁵

Elsewhere, the Prophet said²¹⁶: "Soon Islam will return a stranger to humanity, as it was as its start." Thus He ordained that be read during the twenty-third night of Ramadan, the Surahs of Rúm and of 'Ankabút²¹⁷, so that someone would awaken upon hearing these words²¹⁸:

Alif, Lam, Mim. Men imagine that they will be left tranquil if they just say: 'we believe' and that they will not be put to the test.

It could happen that in hearing this, the Muslim might reflect upon His own case. And there are people who hear one (celestial) word, do not accept it, and keep silent. Moreover, not contented with silence, others fling condemnation upon that very One after the Cause of Whom they have adopted their religion²¹⁹.

All of this does not surprise you at all. Refer rather to the hadith²²⁰ according to which eight hundred 'ulama condemned, without any right to do so, the Amir of the believers ('Alí). Seventy others, on the day of 'áshúrá²²¹, found themselves in the army of those hostile to the truth and in their turn iniquitously condemned the right and the truth (in the person of the Imam Husayn).²²²

Do not believe that they thought then of acting against religion. They thought on the contrary that this condemnation was required by their faith, for who would dare to lie in the face of God? And yet the fact is that there, even as you see it. Finally the intelligent man can not understand this — 2270 years ago²²³, Moses proclaimed Himself a Prophet of God and presented His rod as proof of His mission.²²⁴ The party which was hostile to Him was intelligent enough to reply: "We too can produce enchantments similar to yours." God says, in the Qur'án²²⁵:

Cast the first, said Moses. And they cast and fascinated the sight of the spectators and terrified them. They displayed there a surprising magic.

But, this learned man of whom I speak, during seventy years does not even arrive at this degree of intelligence²²⁶, so that in His own eyes he does not see anyone more pious than himself! Here is how man deceives himself and how, without paying attention, he abases the rank which he held in the eyes of God.

That which I tell you, is to convince you by proofs and by arguments. But in reality, in the path of the justice of God it is not fitting to give such explanations!²²⁷

See: how many times has the Ziyarat Jam'ih²²⁸ been repeated: "That one who knows you, knows God." And yet nobody has been found who has reconciled His words with His acts, not as much as one can carry off the wind²²⁹.

Alone, the work done in its own time can yield fruits. When the Siyyid of the Aswad²³⁰ asked for water, at that time he should have been given it. In our days, every year millions are spent to depict this drama²³¹, but this is only a distraction for men of sincere faith. Representations have a certain merit in that they elevate the names of those who give them closer to God, but what immediate usefulness do they have for the sacred Highness himself who, in order to return to God, has left this world with His lips burned by the fire of thirst?

It is thus necessary that a man act at the propitious moment so that His act may have real utility for him. Today is the day in which men should run to the aid of God (the Báb) and in which, to attract them to the Faith, He causes verses to descend. They do not believe and they refuse their assistance! But, when His religion will be victorious, then each will cry out: "It is I, It is I! (who has come to the help of God). Each one will desire to have come to His aid and night and day they will assume the attitude of suppliants.

Recall the beginnings of Islam. See how the Prophet asked for the help of men. Then, see how after 1270 years Islam has become powerful. It is at the point where you, who are one of its followers, consider it a disgrace to ask anyone to aid you in your religion! Perhaps you go as far as to believe that nobody has raised himself to your degree of piety and is worthy of giving you His assistance! And there are millions like you in all the corners of the schools!²³² At the beginning of His manifestation, Muhammad called for help with great cries: "Respond to an abandoned one," He said.²³³ If someone had answered at that moment, what a high rank he would have occupied!

And so, as you know the value of the present time, give the aid which it is in your power to give and which fits the occasion. In the coming days, millions and millions of men will be born who will want to have given their assistance but their wishes will be in vain.

In that which concerns the proofs, one alone suffices to establish a point in the eyes of the equitable man. Know then that all faith is contained within these three possibilities, as soon as the succeeding divine Manifestation appears:

1) Either, after the appearance of God and of His Testimony, men do not wish to believe, even as it is written in the Surah An'am²³⁴:

It is among them who come to listen; but we have made more than one envelope over their hearts so that they will not understand the Qur'án, and for the heaviness of their ears. When even they saw all sorts of miracles, they would not believe; they will come even, these infidels, to quarrel with you and will say: this Qur'án is nothing but a collection of the fables of the ancients.

It is said in another place²³⁵:

Even though having occupied certitude of their truth; they will nullify it by arrogance and by injustice.

2) Or, by the hearing alone of the arguments and the proofs, there are found to be men who are convinced and who have faith. It is of these ones whose continual existence²³⁶ is the mirror of God, the existence of which is a proof of the Sun of Truth. In every religion, it is the force of these ones who gather around them the nation, and God prefers them to all.

3) Or, finally, there are those who, after having heard the proofs and the arguments, do not have the chance to find faith. These ones return to the category of the first ones, of whom we have spoken and we are thereafter confined to two classes: the nefi (negation) and the isbat (affirmation).

The class of affirmation, at the hearing alone of the proofs and the arguments, believes, while the class of negation does not believe. This is why God ordained holy war²³⁷, so as to cause to enter the true religion by force those who did not want to believe. This is a great favor which God gives to the class of negation, that of obliging it by force to abandon unbelief that it may thereby enter paradise.²³⁸ In every manifestation, if the confessors of the Faith see that the creatures do not let themselves be guided uniquely by proofs and arguments, they have nothing else to do but to ask from God to inspire someone powerful, having as His mission to make the entirety of humanity enter into the religion of God. There is no other means for the salvation of the rest of the creatures. Pass a glance over the surface of the earth — you see that there still

exist men of the Faith of Moses, others of that of David, others finally of that of Jesus. If however, a powerful sovereign made them enter by violence into the true religion, they would enter therein and would in this way meet with the divine mercy. As for (the value of) the proofs and arguments, you can confirm that (notwithstanding that you consider them irrefutable inasmuch as you are a Muslim) 2270 years²³⁹ have passed since the Zabur and the followers of Moses and David have remained what they were beforehand.²⁴⁰

Finally, see the argument of the 'ulama of today — they know and repeat the ahadith which predict the coming of the Imam. Are their acts in conformity with what is written in these ahadith?

But upon what is based the Imamate? Not on anything other than what the Prophet said on the subject of 'Alí. It is by those words that the rank of "Vali" was created.²⁴¹ It is also through a word of the Prophet that pilgrimage to the House of God was created, and it is so for all of the dogmas.

Let us turn our sight even higher: by what is proven the rank of Prophet? It is certain that God has given no other proof but the verses. And so, see: on one side is that One Whom God has given the gift of producing such verses as proof of His mission; on the other is this learned one who is learned only through knowing the ahadith (if we admit that they are authentic). This learned one wishes to judge this Other Who is the possessor of the Hujjat Kubra²⁴² and of the Bayáníh Uzma!²⁴³

In one word, today is the Day of the Last Judgment²⁴⁴, it is the Day in which each one should cry: "Alas for me!", or each one should occupy himself with His own sorrow, following His religion and not following the world, for this lower world is not worthy of the preoccupation of God. Look at what happens outside of your religion: there men are rich in goods and in honors, and yet they do not have faith. Examine with perspicacity the verses of the Qur'án related to the Last Judgment, and you will see therein the people of paradise in paradise — these are those who have known God. And the people of hell in hell — these are those who have remained in ignorance of the Most High²⁴⁵. But as you do not wish to hold except to the ahadith of the family of Muhammad, compare with those this Manifestation, even though it is not seemly to prove a Testimony by means of old ahadith. In effect, it is upon a word of the Master of this Manifestation²⁴⁶ that are created those who create ahadith, for that is the divine Will²⁴⁷. God, if He wishes, and if His servants are worthy, could created as many 'Alís as there are days in the year. The grace of God has been perfect and complete for all eternity, and, if there have occurred breaks in this grace, they are due to His servants and not to Him. In effect, the first thing that He requires is purity²⁴⁸, and how is it that the one who has heard the voice that cried, "Am I not your Lord?" and who has not answered, "Yes,"²⁴⁹ how can he be pure and arrive at the knowledge of the Manifestation²⁵⁰?

Imagine the creatures that live today as if they were living at the time of Muhammad. At the epoch in which this Sun arose, whoever accepted it was accepted in His turn. Their acceptance was such, relative to the preceding Manifestations, that God approved of their change of faith and accorded them saintliness.²⁵¹

How perfect is the grace of God and how far men are from it! How much they wish they had been of those who had heard a single verse issue from the mouth of Muhammad, and today when these verses descend from the heaven of the divine mercy like a spring shower, nobody listens to them! With the passage of time, the Bayánis (Bábis) will form also the same wishes, but they will be put to the test by the Man Yazhiruhu'llah²⁵²!

Finally, one of the most solid proofs that a man can give is the knowledge he has of the Unity.²⁵³ This knowledge is a miracle²⁵⁴, and the explanation of it is found in the Book of the Hayakil Vahid.²⁵⁵ This secret science remained hidden and nobody had suspected the solution thereof — the fruit of it is that one can see in the letters and the numbers in what fashion a thing arrives at 11 degrees to condense itself; which is the Haykal Huwiyat.²⁵⁶ If you voyage upon the Ocean of Names you will see that the first Haykal will complete in the number 19 without entering into the number 20. Possession of this science is a perfect proof for the whole world on condition that one can understand it.²⁵⁷

Among the ahadith that can reassure the heart are the words that the Amir of the believers — 'Alí — (blessing be upon him) pronounces in the Khutbih Tutunjiyyih²⁵⁸:

“Ask then to see appear Him Who, from the flaming Bush of Sinai, spoke with Moses, and this Interlocutor will appear.”

But it must be remembered that nothing has been said (by Me) except for this: "In truth it is I Who is God, there is no God but Me."²⁵⁹

In this same Khutbih, in another passage, it is said²⁶⁰:

“In truth, after this time, a voice will come to you and this voice will teach you some of the questions: then all of these proofs will become clear in your eyes.”

It is also said²⁶¹:

“So in this epoch one will incite all the men of the globe towards what is abrogated.²⁶² Alas! Alas! You desire, you, the coming of a great happiness and that that felicity fall upon you like a rainfall.”

In the Khutbih Yawm Qadir²⁶³ it is said:

“Soon God will send His aid against His enemies so that they will be terrified! God is Pure and Wise.”

In another passage of this same Khutbih Yawm Qadir it is said²⁶⁴:

“Haste yourselves towards the mercy of your Lord before one sounds the trumpet. Haste yourselves towards the Door of which the appearance is pain and torment, of which the interior is benevolence and grace.”

Reflect upon all of that, for it is true, and think about it until you reach the depths of the question. See, 'Alí says in His poetry²⁶⁵:

“When the Turks will have won the victory, then you await the coming of the Mahdi: for He will come and will render justice and the children of Hashim will bring down the kings of the world. One will obey among them²⁶⁶, one is full of joy, and one will speak without understanding. This will be a child among the children, without intelligence and incapable of having an opinion by himself. It is thus that the Mahdi will appear and that God will manifest Himself through you. He will manifest Himself by the truth and it is by the truth that He will propagate justice. His name is

the name of the Prophet, may my soul be sacrificed to Him! Therefore, do not torment Him nor afflict Him, O my son, and haste towards Him."²⁶⁷

There is also the hadith Lawh-i-Fatimih, in which the Prophet says:²⁶⁸

"He will thus complete His religion through the arrival of His son Muhammad: and this will be a great mercy upon men, for this son will appear gifted with the perfection of Moses, the rays of Jesus, the patience of Job. In His time, His friends will be honored and will send to Him their heads as gifts²⁶⁹, as this was done at another time among the Turks and the Deilem.²⁷⁰ They will be killed, they will be burned, they will be miserable and trembling with fear. The earth will be tinted with their blood and tears and cries will arise from among their women. In truth! It is these ones who are my friends, for it is by them that the sleeping discussion will be reawakened; through them will be reproduced the quakings of the earth, through them will be removed all the signs and all the traces of infidelity; it is they who have found the true way; may God give them His benedictions!"²⁷¹

It is also said in the prayer Do'a Nutbih:²⁷²

"It is sorrowful for me to see you in tears and to witness the hatred that men carry for you."

It is well evident that all that is predicted here has been fulfilled, in the Dawn of Unity (the Báb), for, since His appearance, you know by what sufferings He has been deluged.

The hadith Adhirbayjan is also related to this point:²⁷³

"That which happens in Adhirbayjan is of all necessity for Us; nothing can impede that which must be produced there. Remain therefore in your homes; but if you hear that an agitator appears there, then run towards him."

And this hadith continues in saying:²⁷⁴

"Alas, for the Arabs, for civil war is nigh."²⁷⁵

If, in pronouncing these last words, the Prophet had wished to make allusion to His own mission, they would have been in vain and of no value.

Of the same character furthermore is the hadith Abi Lubayd Makhzumi²⁷⁶, which gives the significance of the isolated letters of the Qur'án. The demonstration of this point was given (by Me) in the Book entitled Tafsir Suratu'l-Kawthar²⁷⁷. And this hadith refers to the year 1260.

Furthermore, the hadith Mufaddal, where it is said:²⁷⁸

"He will manifest Himself in the year 60 and His name shall be elevated."²⁷⁹

And further, the hadith of His Highness Sadiq²⁸⁰ (blessing be upon him), in which it is said:

"In truth, God has hidden four things in four others. His testimony He has hidden in His creature,

and in His testimony there is one of the attributes of Joseph, for He will be sold and bought: and meanwhile nobody knows that this is Joseph.”

Know that My material body is exactly that of Joseph.²⁸¹ If God wishes to make one reappear who seems to be aged thirty or forty years, who has lived one thousand years, that is impossible in this world of possibilities even though God is All-Powerful. If you cite contrary to this assertion the story of Khidr.²⁸² I would say that it is the same for him — yes, he is always living, but before God.²⁸³

It is also the same, as you know, for Satan, who is the incarnation even of the word "negation", in opposition to the word "affirmation", for he wished to extinguish the light of God. He was a servant and an adorer of God, but he prostrated himself for love of himself and not for love of the Lord.²⁸⁴ Understand then, because you adore God, adore Him for Himself, not for yourself, for otherwise you will exchange the fruits of "affirmation" for those of the tree of "negation".²⁸⁵ May God protect us from all the arguments of the "negation".

On the same theme is in this hadith of Imam Musa Kazim, the Seventh Imam²⁸⁶ (may blessing be upon him!):

“The Master of this Manifestation will be detested by men, chased, solitary, a stranger to His family.”

From the same Imam is this hadith, which it is obligatory to read on the nights of Ramad.an:²⁸⁷

“O my God! Manifest that One Who will invite to Thy Book, and Who will devote Himself to propagating Thy religion. Make for Thy khalif²⁸⁸ in this lower world as Thou hast made for those who were before Him. Cause Thy religion to penetrate into the heart of men, this religion which Thou hast chosen for Him. Reassure Him after He has been terrorized; make Him adore Thee, He Who does not accord Thee any companions. Choose Him and, by His beloved intercession, the others, aid Him and enable that He aids others—aid Him with a rare assistance. Cause that His works be easy and from Thyself give Him a sovereignty that can be His support. O God! Manifest through Him Thy religion so that nothing will remain hidden of the truth through the fear He could have of the creatures.”

The traditions and the ahadith related to and conforming to the Manifestation are innumerable.²⁸⁹

If you wish, examine the "Bihar al-Anwar"²⁹⁰ and if you find therein something contrary to the truth of My mission, know that there are various ways of replying to them. Before you [reject Him on the basis of such a tradition] you should refer to the Testimony²⁹¹ and communicate to Him this hadith, for nobody but He knows (how to interpret it or if it is authentic). The Prophet said this, in effect:²⁹²

“When I speak, I pronounce one word that has for you seventy-one meanings.”²⁹³

Furthermore, the authenticity of these ahadith is not proven in a certain manner. Everyone in the world agrees to say that they are not definitive arguments²⁹⁴, and their very authors have recommended to abandon them when they did not conform to the Book.²⁹⁵ Finally, you know very well that there have been wishes of God which have not been accomplished²⁹⁶, and this has happened often. For each one of these cases, there are peremptory reasons which tranquilized you, but know that in reality all of the wishes of

God have been realized. For example (at the appearance of the Mahdi), the sun must rise from the West.²⁹⁷ This does not refer to the solar sphere. If it were a question of this, the phenomenon would have been produced during the preceding Manifestations, but here, it is a matter of the Sun of Truth²⁹⁸ that must appear from the sunset. But, you know that the rising of the Sun of Truth²⁹⁹ took place at Mecca, and you see that the rising of this Sun took place in the land of Fa.³⁰⁰ This is the explanation of the phrase — "the sun shall rise in the West" — and not the exterior sense that is ordinarily attached to it. It is in this fashion that the ancient 'ulama', who were circumspect, spoke of this question. It is in this way also that Shaykh Ahmad Zayn al-Din³⁰¹ (may God exalt him!), spoke of this and wrote:

“Therefore all of the strange things that have been said on the subject of the return of the Imam Mahdi, understand them like this.³⁰² You have also heard it said that in the Day of this return the pure ones will make their nourishment of their enemies.”

That there is a science therein is explained by His Highness Sadiq (may blessing be upon him!), in His commentary³⁰³ on this verse of the Qur'án³⁰⁴:

That he throw His eyes upon His nourishment.

and the word "nourishment" he interprets with the word "science". Contemplate the spectacle that is offered to you by the present times. You see the doctors acting in their religion, following their idea³⁰⁵: the commandments of God are dead letter to them. But, He Who is the Master of giving order manifests Himself with invincible and astonishing proofs, and they have remained in obscurity.

It is exactly the same for the Christian nation. How much their priests would have wished to understand in a fashion that pleased God even a single one of the commandments of the Gospel. Muhammad appeared, Who was the End and the Origin even of the commandments of God, and they did not understand this! Still today they condemn themselves to mortifications in order to observe the Gospel in a fashion pleasing to God. See how vile and low is the reward of those who have remained in obscurity. Not one understands His first cause or His final cause and all agitate themselves like drunken men, except for those to whom God has accorded salvation.

Today is the Day that the people of paradise³⁰⁶ glorify in their in their habitations, for they are seated upon the throne of certitude, of faith, and of belief in God. From there they laugh at the people of hell. Everything that one can say on the subject of the Bayáni³⁰⁷, that they are weak in intelligence or crazy, the same was said of those who believed at the beginning of Islam³⁰⁸:

Are we going to believe ourselves, as have believed the fools?

However, in truth, the companions of this Manifestation have been marked by God with the seal of intelligence³⁰⁹ and nobody in speaking of them can say again: "Are we going to believe ourselves, as we have believed in fools". If someone spoke in this way, he would lie to himself, for finally you are yourself one of the disciples of the late Siyyid Kazim Rashti³¹⁰. As such, you trample down under your feet the doctors of Najaf and of Karbila³¹¹, and you pay no more attention to them than to a grain of barley. What can they be in the eyes of those who have received the complete teaching of the deceased³¹²? That if by chance you are not one of the Siyyids, then look upon the companions of the Master of the Name³¹³, of whom the name conforms to the name of your Lord³¹⁴. And so, these ignorant masons were reduced to nothing by the most learned mujtahid in proofs and philosophy, because they obeyed their imagination

and incertitude. He used regarding them expressions such as I would be ashamed to report. And yet, he was correct about them because of the proofs and arguments which came to him from the divine world.

The greater part of the confessors of the Faith, in this Manifestation, have been masters of intelligence and of understanding, in such manner that their act of faith is a proof for those who have not believed. It should have been the same in every Manifestation, with the conversion of men who are a proof for those who have remained incredulous. You know who is the first confessor of this Faith³¹⁵; you know that the major part of the doctors of the Shaykhi³¹⁶, Siyyidiyyih³¹⁷ and the other sects admired His knowledge and His talent. When he entered Isfahan³¹⁸, the urchins of the town cried out as he passed by, "Ah! Ah! A student in tatters has arrived!" And so, this man, by His proofs and His arguments, convinced a Siyyid of proven learning, Muhammad Baqir!³¹⁹ In truth this is one of the proofs of this Manifestation for, after the death of the Siyyid³²⁰, this person³²¹ went to see the greater part³²² of the doctors of Islam and did not encounter the truth except before the Master of Truth.³²³ It is thus that he came to the destiny that had been fixed for him. In truth! The creatures of the beginning and of the end of this Manifestation envy him and will envy him until the Day of Judgment. And who can then accuse this master of intelligence of mental weakness and flightiness? See also the number of the name of God³²⁴. This man lived tranquil and pure to such a degree that nobody, friend or foe, denied His talents and His saintliness. All admired His greatness in the sciences³²⁵ and the height he had attained in philosophy. Then refer to the Tafsir Suratu'l-Kawthar³²⁶ and to the other treatises which were written for him and which prove the elevation of the rank he occupies close to God!³²⁷

See the others, all the others the names of which it is unnecessary that I mention in this treatise. Those whom I have named are to tranquilize your heart, for finally, how can one give as proof of the truth of a Manifestation the faith of those who have believed in it? It would be as to wish to demonstrate the existence of the sun by its reflection in a mirror.

In truth! If I produce so many proofs it is that, wishing the salvation of all, I hope that one at least will be understood. I attest by the pure attributes of God! It is wearisome that anyone know Me³²⁸. But to know the Truth — the Báb — is to know God; to love Him, is to love God.³²⁹ Knowing the boundaries that limit the creature, I hid My name. It is these same creatures who said of Muhammad, Who never had and will never have His equal: "It's a lunatic!". They claim, "we are not of those who have spoken in this way", but their acts demonstrate the falsehood of their words³³⁰. That which God says, it is what His Testimony says, and when even the universe of all things would say one thing and the Testimony another, God is guarantor that it is He Who speaks the truth. Without this not one thing could exist, and if one did exist, it would return to Him as to its place of origin.³³¹

See how these people are truly pious! Two honorable witnesses are sufficient for them to prove [the veracity of] whatever thing, and yet despite all of these confessors of the Faith³³², they hesitate to believe in this Manifestation. If you want to understand the sense of this verse³³³:

The testimony of God suffices³³⁴

strip yourself of all exterior goods and penetrate into the innermost recesses of your own being. Following this, content yourself with whatever is said by Him Whom God shall manifest³³⁵, for that which He says, it is Him³³⁶ Who says it. Do not think that this is a futile proof, for it is this proof itself which is brought by the Qur'án, it is this proof that God manifested for the sect of Jesus, it is also this one that Muhammad manifested in the Book of God.³³⁷ And yet men do not accept the testimony of the Book of God and do

not act except following the testimony of their own inspiration!³³⁸

These proofs, I give them to you to illumine your vision for those whose eyes are clear-seeing and attached to the divine philosophy³³⁹, what need have they of proofs?

As today is the Day of the Last Judgment, this speech must be manifested³⁴⁰:

Everything will perish, except the face of God³⁴¹.

The work of God, it is the Bayán³⁴², for in its shade the confessors of truth rest peacefully, and [yet] nobody understands it. Refer to the responses which Shaykh Ahmad³⁴³ and Siyyid Kazim³⁴⁴ gave to those who questioned them, and you will be convinced then that the manifestation of Him Who was promised is this Truth. In effect, in the hadith of Kumayl³⁴⁵ it is said:

“In the first year, open without signal the curtains of grandeur; in the second, efface the futilities of imagination and prove that which is evident; in the third, divulge the secrets and implant them victoriously (in the hearts of men); in the fourth, be ecstatic in God to prove the unity³⁴⁶; in the fifth, it is the rising of the light of the dawn of eternity.”³⁴⁷

You will see this light if you do not flee or if you are not troubled.

Examine the Du'a-i-Sahar³⁴⁸, in which His Highness Baqir³⁴⁹ said:

“O My God! I ask from Thee Thy light of the most luminous of Thy lights, which is resplendent.³⁵⁰
O My God! I ask for Thy light, Thy complete light.”³⁵¹

This makes allusion, first of all, to the Prophet of God, secondly, to 'Alí the Amir of the faithful, and thereafter following until the fifth degree, where it speaks of the light which is the Lord of Lords, for light is a degree. Even as the light which burns itself in order to illumine others is devoid of egoism, even so you will see, if you live and if God permits it, the lights of this Manifestation and you will find them devoid of egoism — they sacrifice themselves to show the unity of God and to bring about the execution of His counsels and His commandments.

This is something known from the words of the revered Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i³⁵². But there are also indications without number to the subject of the Manifestation. For example, he wrote in His own hand to Siyyid Kazim Rashti:³⁵³

“Even as for the construction of a house there must be a terrain, even so for this Manifestation must present itself the right moment. But here one can not give an answer fixing the moment. Very soon it will be known in a certain fashion.”

What have you heard yourself so often from Siyyid Kazim, is this not an explanation? Did he not repeat at every instant: "You do not want then that I go and that God appear?"³⁵⁴ What he said as well at the time of His last voyage, that you heard yourself, do you not recall this?³⁵⁵ And the story of Mirza Muhammad Akhbari that 'Abdu'l-Husayn Shushteri recalls?³⁵⁶ Mirza Muhammad Akhbari asked one day, being at Kazamayn³⁵⁷, of the venerated Siyyid³⁵⁸ when the Imam would manifest himself. The Siyyid cast His eyes over the assembly and said to him, "You, you will see him." Mulla Muhammad Taqi Harawi³⁵⁹ also told

this story in Isfahan.

The story of 'Abdu'llah ibn Mubarak³⁶⁰ who, at Shiraz, told it to the merchant Hajji Mirza Muhammad³⁶¹, is also a proof of the truth of this Manifestation.

But you yourself, since the day in which the Highness³⁶² was manifested, how many times have you consulted fate with the aid of the Qur'án³⁶³, and the oracle responded peremptorily to your request?

Aqa Siyyid Ja'far Shibriyehi³⁶⁴ said some extraordinary things on this subject: go learn them. But those are not proofs, they are associations of facts suitable to tranquilize the heart.

If we pass to the doctors of the science of the value of letters³⁶⁵, we encounter the following facts:

Aqa Siyyid Javad Karbila'i³⁶⁶ said that before the Manifestation, an Indian wrote to him with the Name of Him Who would be manifested.³⁶⁷

The honorable Shaykh 'Alí Khurasani³⁶⁸ has recounted that at Makka he heard during the past few years, in the area of the Kaaba, a voice which recited verses.³⁶⁹ He made a calculation of their numerical value and the number found was exactly that of the year of the Manifestation. Go and learn this story.

Mirza 'Abdu'l-Wahhab Khurasani³⁷⁰ speaks of a learned one versed in the science of letters, who found in the numbers the name of the Master of the Manifestation before He manifested Himself.³⁷¹

There is also the anecdote relative to Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i, on His way to Makka³⁷². It was proven that this anecdote is authentic, and hence this is something certain.³⁷³ Disciples of the deceased one reported the remarks which they heard and among them were persons such as Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq³⁷⁴ and Murtaḍa Quli³⁷⁵. Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq states that the Shaykh said to them one day:³⁷⁶

“Pray that you will not be found in the beginning of the Manifestation and of the Return³⁷⁷, for there will be many civil wars.”

He added:

“If someone from among you still lives in that time, he will see strange things between the years [12]60 and [12]67. And what strange thing can be stranger than the very Being of the Manifestation? You will be there, and you will see furthermore an extraordinary fact: it is that God, in order to render victorious this Manifestation, will raise up a Being Who will speak of Himself, without having learned anything from others.”

Among other facts appropriate to reassure the heart is this one: in the province of Adhirbayjan, two individuals heard four poems in a dream. In the morning, when they recited them to each other, they were identical one to the other. Certainly this is a proof of the Manifestation. The chronicler of this story is Mulla Yusuf³⁷⁸, who received it from Mirza Mas'ud.³⁷⁹

If you wished to summarize everything produced on this subject by the science of the value of letters, it would be a complete book you would have to write. (I will cite) among others the extractions of Siyyid Muhammad Akhlati³⁸⁰, who wrote at least five hundred and some years ago a great number of treatises

upon this science. He writes:³⁸¹

“For you will come to one who will instruct you in the two worlds so as to cause religion to be revived after the "ra" and the "ghain". If you add to that the "he" then know that I have no further secret for you. Then, if you multiply the "hou" by itself, you will find the name of the Pole of the two worlds. Finally, take "moh" before "med" and compose them together to attain the aim of your desires.”³⁸²

That which I tell you here, it is to tranquilize your soul, for, in truth, a single verse of the Bayán is an infinitely greater proof before God than all these proofs, for nobody in the world has the power to cause to descend similar ones, and it is this which demonstrates the power of God. Show one of these verses to all of the 'ulama' of the East and of the West, and if from among them they produce for you a similar one, then you would have the right to hesitate. But, in truth, from among the [verses] that I have given you, it is not possible that any one among them can produce their like. One of these verses is the following:³⁸³

“Say: O my God! In truth it is Thee Who knows the sky, the earth and what there is between them. It is Thou Who accordeth knowledge to whomsoever Thou willest, and Who refuseth it to whomsoever Thou willest according to Thy pleasure. Thou abaseth whomsoever Thou wishest, whomever Thou wishest Thou dost elevate. Thou cherishest whomsoever Thou willest. Thou honorest whomsoever Thou willest. To whomsoever Thou willest, Thou accordest Thy assistance as Thou dost oppose whomsoever Thou willest. Thou preservest whomsoever Thou willest from necessity, and whomsoever Thou willest, Thou deprivest of all; in Thy hand is the sovereignty of all things: Thou createst what Thou willest, as Thou willest, and in truth Thou art the All-Powerful in all that Thou doest.”

See, in the Qur'án, nothing other than the Bismillah ar-rahman ar-rahim³⁸⁴ came down, while in the Bayán³⁸⁵ have descended in an explicit manner verses which form the explanation thereof, two hundred and sixty one commentaries on this utterance.³⁸⁶ One part is consigned to the Bayán. It would have been possible to make more verses descend, but that was not requested. If God wishes, He will make more descend through the Intermediary of His Testimony although a Bismillah al-'Alí al-'Azim³⁸⁷ should suffice for all men as proof of this Manifestation.

Recall the first days of the Manifestation — how many men were dead at that time of cholera!³⁸⁸ That was one of the marvels of the Manifestation, and nobody understood it.³⁸⁹ During four years the plague reigned among the Shi'i Muslims without anyone grasping the significance thereof. See this verse in the Qur'án³⁹⁰:

The infidels have thought that they could take as patrons those who are only our servants? We have prepared for them jahannam³⁹¹ as a dwelling place.

This verse was descended for them who took the Christian priests as guides against the Prophet of God, and this very chastisement was their hell during their lives, for there has not been and there is no greater recompense for him who does pious deeds in this world than the approbation of God, and there is no fire more violent than to be far from God in this lower world.

Know that this menace of hell is made for those who adore others save God: to adore means here to obey. One does not obey God in this lower world except in obeying that One in Whom one can see God in each

Manifestation. Understand well this so as not to obey others besides God. The day in which Him Whom God shall manifest will appear, you will have acted against Him and consequently against God if you continue to obey one of the doctors of the Bayán.³⁹² If on the contrary you obey Him Whom God shall manifest, you will have adored God. God says in the Qur'án³⁹³:

In what other Book will they believe hereafter?

The true meaning of this verse, in its inner significance is: "In what will they believe after the Prophet of God and that which descended for Him?"³⁹⁴

Know well that the adoration of another besides God can not suffice in any way, while to know God suffices, to the exclusion of all things, and this on condition that man follows with piety the great way in which he entered at the very moment in which another Order manifested itself coming from God.

As for what you ask on the subject of the foundations of religion and of its dogmas, know that the basis of religion is the knowledge of God — perfect knowing and knowing His unity. The perfect knowledge of the Unity is to reject all of the attributes of the earth of His sanctity, of the heavens of His glory and sublimity.³⁹⁵

Know that to know God is not possible in this world except by the knowledge of Him in Whom God is contemplated³⁹⁶. Know equally that at the depth of every Manifestation is found these words: "There is no God but God."

It is after this "affirmation" that appears the mention of the Name of the Master of the Manifestation. It was so for Noah in the epoch of Noah, for Ibrahim in His time, for Moses and for Jesus, each one in His epoch. It was also so for Muhammad at the moment in which He appeared, and it will be so henceforth until the end that will never have an end. Do not pronounce then the names of the Prophets except in following them with benedictions. Do not write them except in inscribing these benedictions afterwards, for they were and are very saintly and close to God. Do not write the word "Allah" without adding "He is Great and Glorious". When you write [the name of] "Man Yazhiruhu'llah" follow it with this phrase — "Irtifa'a wa irtifa'a wa imtena'a qadd'hou": may His power be augmented and fortified.

Recall the benedictions which during the epoch of the ghaybat soghra³⁹⁷ were pronounced by Abu'l-Hasan Zorrab Isfahani³⁹⁸ and which Shaykh Tusi³⁹⁹ reports in His book, "Misbah-i-Kabir":⁴⁰⁰

O my God! Send Thy benedictions to Thy Vali! That He may resuscitate following Thy orders and affirming Thy laws, those who invite men to Thy Name and those who conduct them in Thy path: for He is the Testimony for Thy creatures; it is He Who is Thy khalif upon the earth, Thy Testimony for Thy servants. O my God! Cause to be loved the one who gives Him aid and prolongs His life here below. Ornament the world with the length of His visit! O God! Protect Him from the envious and from those who act against Him and deliver Him from those who wish Him evil!

But, in the epoch of the ghaybat soghra, the hidden Highness⁴⁰¹ was not the butt of persecutions from any enemy, so reflect and see that this is what is happening today, for He is upon the mountain of Mah-Ku and He says:⁴⁰²

O My God! Give by His person to Himself, to His descendants, to His family, to His friends, to His subjects, to His intimates, to all, and to all the inhabitants of the earth, a ray which illumines their sight, facilitates their task, cause them to succeed in the best of works in this world and in the other one. In truth! Thou canst do whatsoever Thou wishest.

O My God! Resuscitate after Him that by which He can renew Thy religion and cause to live by Him what is changed in Thy Book. Manifest by Him what Thou modifiest in Thy orders so that by Him Thy religion may arise anew. Give Him in hand a new Book, pure and saintly, that no doubt, no hesitation may be in His Book and nobody will be able to be present who destroys or modifies it.

O My God! Illumine by Thy resplendency all that is obscure, and, strengthened by His power, disperse the ancient laws. By His preeminence, ruin those who have not followed the way of God. By Him, make perish all the tyrants, extinguish by His sword all the discords, efface by His justice all the oppression, make obey His orders those who have command; under His empire, topple all empires. O My God! Abase whoever wants to abase Him, kill whoever is His enemy; renounce whoever renounces Him and mislead whoever rejects His truth, renounces His commandments, strives to obscure His light and to extinguish His name.

O My God! Accord Thy benedictions to Muhammad Mustafa⁴⁰³, Thy mercy to 'Alí Murtada⁴⁰⁴, to Fatima Zuh'ra⁴⁰⁵, to Hasan Rida⁴⁰⁶, to their successors, to those who have made Thy light shine, who were the flags of abstinence and the beacons who show the way, to those who made others find the right way, to those who were the cause for man being able to arrive at God! Send Thy benedictions to Thy friend⁴⁰⁷ and to those who are Thy lieutenants⁴⁰⁸ as well as to their descendants; augment their lives, prolong the time of their sojourn here below and cause them to arrive at the object of their desires in the low world and in the other, for Thou art the All-Powerful.

Repeat often these benedictions, and if you do not have time to repeat them all, do not forget to say the last part. Be aware on the day of the appearance of Him Whom God shall manifest, for this prayer has descended from the heavens for Him. I have instructed the people in My religion not to rejoice in the misfortune of anyone. That way, it may be that in the epoch of the appearance of this Sun of Reality⁴⁰⁹, no suffering will touch Him.

While as to the dhikr⁴¹⁰ which you ask about, repeat as many times as God has created beings and will create them: "There is no God but God.!"

Give to this point all of your attention, so as not to remain in the "negation" and to enter under the shadow of the "affirmation". Know well that all the existences are enclosed in this dilemma: "negation — affirmation". The second of these two trees is the tree of good and for it all good explanation is good; the first is the tree of bad and everything that concerns it, every bad explanation is outside of the good.

Know also that all the nations, in their religious language, employ these same terms, but remain forever in the shade of the "negation". The significance of the word "affirmation" at the moment in which the Prophet appeared was: "There is no other God but God and Muhammad is His Prophet." In each Manifestation of each celestial envoy it is thus, and yet how often have you not repeated these words which remained obscure for you: "There is no God but God!"

You have heard that God, at the day of the Last Judgment, will establish with one word the account of the creatures: this word, it is this one. Even as when God sends a Prophet, whoever affirms Him enters under the shade of "affirmation", from then on His account is established, he will go to the heavens. That one who will not have given Him His faith will see His account establish itself in the shade of "negation" and he will go to hell.⁴¹¹

Ask in every instant refuge in God, for the believer is more rare than the red sulphur⁴¹² of the philosophical stone.⁴¹³ All recognize the unity of that One Whom they ignore however! For example, the followers of Christ admitted the unity of God, while their adoration of divinity returns in this world to Him Who manifested Himself and Who is God for there is no other God but the Prophet of God. So their piety remains sterile for them. Given then your most scrupulous attention to the knowledge of the Unity, for that is the Sirat⁴¹⁴ of which you have heard spoken, this bridge more narrow than a hair, sharper than a razor. Do not add [to faith in God] faith in those who say they have understood the Book of God, for I have well examined them, and I have found in them [nothing] but words and conspiracies of doctrine, except two persons.⁴¹⁵ These ones have already appeared and have lifted up their words in the midst of Islam in such fashion that their acts in the knowledge of God were in accord with those. Among the doctors of the Bayán, one does not hold to words.⁴¹⁶

The Christian doctors boasted to have understood the Gospels. But the first word of this Book relates to the creation of Muhammad.⁴¹⁷ For 1270 years this Prophet manifested Himself and God knows how much these doctors have made interpretations of their sacred text, without arriving even distantly at the true meaning, which is Muhammad. If they had understood, be it only a single word of the New Testament, they would have believed in the Prophet of God. You see well that they have not understood one syllable of the Gospel and that they have not explained thereof the terms except thoughtlessly and without inspiration.

Recall Sunni Islam, you will see that it is the same for this. How many commentaries have been written upon the Qur'án without understanding that the very essence of the creation of the Qur'án is the descendants from the Prophet. It is the same also as well for the Shi'i and their commentaries. If they had understood, they would not have ignored that since the first point of the Qur'án, the sacred Book, has for its purpose only the awaiting of the Manifestation of the Testimony. You see well that they have understood nothing other than words empty of meaning and of inspiration.

And so, therefore, understand then, and do not be like those who oppose this Manifestation of the Bayán. Break off all friendship with others than God and suffice yourself with Him outside of others besides Him. Often repeat this verse of the Bayán:⁴¹⁸

Say: God suffices all things in all things, nothing prevails over God; nothing, neither in the heavens, nor upon the earth, nor in that which is between them. By His order, He will create whatever He wishes. He is the Knowing, the All-Powerful.

Do not think that this phrase, "God suffices all things" is an imagination. Know that in every Manifestation, faith in the Master of this Manifestation suffices you for and over all things of the earth, so that nothing that is in this lower world is superior to your faith. If you do not believe, the Man Yazhiruhu'llah will account you among those of the "negation", if you believe, your faith will substitute for all things of the earth, even if you possess nothing. That is the meaning of this verse in what concerns the Prophet, in the preceding Manifestation, then for the following Manifestation, finally for that of Man

Yazhiruhu'llah, and in this way thereafter until the end that will have no end, from the beginning that did not have a beginning.⁴⁹ Be attentive and say:

Glory to God, Master of the two worlds, may our Lord pardon us at every instant, before the instant and after the instant!

NOTES

All notes by Peter Terry, unless otherwise indicated.

¹"Polemical works" — devoted to attack upon or refutation of the opinions or principles of another; Shoghi Effendi, in "God Passes By", p. 26 (Wilmette:BPT,1944;1970) echoes Nicolas in calling "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" "the most important of the polemical works of the Báb".

²"Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad" — given name of the Founder of the Bábí Faith, also known as the Báb, the Primal Point, the Point of the Bayán, Who was born in 1819 in Shiraz and died in 1850 in Tabriz, both cities in Iran.

³"Makka" — name of the city located on the western coast of Arabia (the modern state is named Saudi Arabia) which is the site of pilgrimage of all Muslims.

⁴"ulama" — plural of "alim" meaning "knowing, cognizant, informed, learned, erudite"; having "ilm" which is defined as "knowledge, learning, perception, science". All definitions from the Arabic are taken from Hans Wehr's "Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic", translated and edited by J. Milton Cowan and published by Spoken Language Services, Ithaca, New York, 1976. In this context "ulama" refers to those who are trained in Muslim learning, who are the Islamic equivalent of clergymen.

⁵"Yazd" — city in central Iran, between Isfahan and Kirman.

⁶"A Prophet in the Nineteenth Century" — subtitle of "Seyyed 'Ali Mohammed dit le Báb", by A.L.M.Nicolas, published in Paris by Dujarric in 1905. Selected chapters that pertain to the biography of the Báb are translated into English with the title "A Prophet in Modern Times" and published by Lulu in 2008.

⁷"Risaliy-i-Fiqhiyyih" — one of the first writings of the Báb, written according to A.L.M.Nicolas in his biography of the Báb(6), on pages 189-190, at the age of nineteen (ca. 1838).

⁸"Commentary on the Surah of Yusuf" — first work of the Báb revealed after His declaration on 23 May 1844, first chapter revealed on that occasion according to the eye-witness account of Mulla Husayn Bushrui; also called the "Qayyum'u'l-Asma" and "Ahsan al-qisas"; "what Baha'u'llah has characterized as 'the first, the greatest, and mightiest of all books' in the Bábí Dispensation" (Shoghi Effendi, "God Passes

By" (1), p. 23).

⁹"Bayán" — internal evidence indicates that both the "Persian Bayán" and the "Arabic Bayán" were written during the Báb's interment in Mah-Ku most likely in 1848; no student of the Bábí Revelation other than A.L.M.Nicolas makes this claim that portions of the "Bayán" had been among "the first writings of the new Apostle".

¹⁰"Kitab al-haramayn" — also referred to as "Kitab bayna'l-haramayn" and as "Sahifa bayna'l-haramayn", referring either to the twin holy cities of all Muslims, Mecca and Medina, or to the two holy cities of Shi'ite Islam, Karbila and Najaf, probably revealed in the summer of 1845.(see footnote 15)

¹¹"Kitab al-Ruh" — also referred to as "Kitab al-'adl", revealed, according to A.L.M.Nicolas, during His voyage from Maskat to Bushihr; according to H.M.Balyuzi, the Báb, "returning from His pilgrimage to Mecca, arrived at Bushihr sometime in the month of Safar 1261 A.H.(February-March 1845)." (H.M.Balyuzi, "The Báb", Oxford:George Ronald,1973, p. 77).

¹²That is, on board a sailing vessel.

¹³"Maskat" — a city now located in Oman and adjacent to the modern settlement named Matrah, located in the Gulf of Oman, south of the straight of Hormuz and roughly, opposite the border between Iranian and Pakistanian Baluchistan.

¹⁴"Bushihr" — a city in Iran in the province of Fars, located on the Persian Gulf and roughly one hundred miles southwest of Shiraz, and opposite the modern city of Al-Kuwayt in the nation-state of Kuwait.

¹⁵Joseph Arthur le Comte de Gobineau, "Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale", Paris: Didier et Cie, 1865.

¹⁶"Kitab al-haramayn" is dated by A.L.M.Nicolas in (6), p. 206; Nicolas quotes his copy of this work and translates it as follows: "le premier jour que l'esprit descendit dans le coeur de cet esclave etait le 15 du mois de Rebi el-Ewel. Et jusqu'a aujourd'hui, ou Dieu vous interdit mes versets, quinze mois ont ete ecrits dans le livre de Dieu." This I translate into English as follows: "the first day that the spirit descended into the heart of this slave[referring to the Báb] was the 15th of the month of Rabi' al-Awal[1260]. And until today, when God forbids you My verses, fifteen months have been written in the book of God." As the 15th of Rabi' I 1260 corresponds to the 4th of April 1844, fifteen months later would find us at the 4th of July 1845. According to the Báb's "Kitab al-fihrist", p. 286, which was revealed according to its own testimony (cited by Denis MacEoin in his article on the Báb (pp. 278-84, vol. III, "Encyclopedia Iranica", 1989; and in his book "The Sources for Early Bábí Doctrine and History", Leiden: Brill, 1992) on 15 Jumada II 1261, which corresponds to 21 June 1845 when the Báb was in Bushihr, "the first day on which the spirit descended into his heart" was the 15th of Rabi' II 1260, which corresponds to the 4th of May 1844 (this date is also reported in the above-cited article and book). It may be pointed out, that if the text of the "Kitab al-haramayn" indeed gives the date of its composition as 15 Jumada II 1261/21 June 1845,

to quote MacEoin, and if it indeed states that it has been revealed fifteen months after "the first day on which the spirit descended into his heart" to quote Nicolas, and if, to quote MacEoin, this spiritual event took place on 15 Rabi' II 1260/4 May 1844 rather than on 15 Rabi' I 1260/4 April 1844 (to quote Nicolas), what is the real difference? The period of time between 15 Rabi' I 1260/4 April 1844 and 21 June 1845 is precisely fourteen months and two weeks. The period of time between 15 Rabi' II 1260/4 May 1844 and 21 June 1845 is precisely thirteen months and two weeks. According to MacEoin (in his earlier cited book) there are several manuscripts of "Kitab al-haramayn" including two copies dated circa 1261/1845, and until all of these copies are carefully studied it will be impossible to determine which, if any, of these dates are reliable. However, it should be noted that MacEoin's date for the composition of "Kitab al-haramayn" falls two weeks short of fifteen months after Nicolas' date for "the first day", and in either case, the revelation of this book falls in early summer 1845.

¹⁷"A Prophet in the Nineteenth Century" — subtitle of "Seyyed 'Ali Mohammed dit le Báb", by A.L.M.Nicolas, published in Paris by Dujarric in 1905.

¹⁸"Haji Siyyid 'Ali Kirmani" — The English translator has been so far unable to identify this individual. It is clear that he was a Shi'i Muslim, probably acquainted with the Shaykhi school (inasmuch as the Báb refers thereto in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih"), and obviously from Kirman, a city located in central Iran, in the province of Kirman, west of the desert called Dasht-i-Lut.

¹⁹That is, in the Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih.

²⁰Qur'án, Surah of the 'Imrans (III), verse 60, N.J.Dawood translation into English, Penguin Classics.

²¹In the "Kitab al-haramayn"

²²"Mah-Ku" — town with mountain fortress located in the northwest corner of Iranian Adharbayjan, now the town closest to the Iranian northwestern border with Turkey, about fifty miles south of Mt. Ararat and one hundred miles south of Jerevan, Armenian capital city; the first prison to which the Báb was exiled in 1847 through the contrivance of Haji Mirza Aqasi, Grand Vizier of Muhammad Shah, the King of Kings of the Persian domains. According to 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in Balyuzi ("The Báb", Oxford: George Ronald, 1973, p. 132), the Báb remained incarcerated in Mah-Ku for nine months. According to Nabil-i-A'zam, the Bábí/Bahá'í chronicler, part of whose account was translated into English with copious notes by Shoghi Effendi, the Báb left Mah-Ku on the twentieth day after Naw-Ruz (Persian New Year), which Shoghi Effendi calculated as 9 April 1848 (see "The Dawnbreakers", p. 375 British edition and p. 512 U.S. edition). If this date is reliable, and the duration of His stay at Mah-Ku as cited by 'Abdu'l-Baha is also to be trusted, then it seems to be apparent that the Báb arrived in Mah-Ku circa 9 July 1847, three Gregorian (solar) calendar years prior to His martyrdom.

²³Precognition of the Báb — Nicolas makes this assertion but gives no evidence in support thereof. Perhaps in one of his other publications devoted to the Báb, such as his biography cited earlier, there may be some instances reported of the clairvoyance of the Báb.

²⁴"denouement of the tragedy" — the outcome of a complex sequence of events; Nicolas seems to refer here to the martyrdom of the Báb, which took place on 9 July 1850 in the city of Tabriz, located about two hundred miles south of Mah-Ku (see previous footnote), on the eastern side of Lake Urumiyyih, in modern Azarbayjan-e Sharqi.

²⁵Nicolas seems to be pointing out that inasmuch as the Báb was clairvoyant, and inasmuch as He does speak of Mah-Ku but not of Chihriq in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih", it seems evident that He was writing from Mah-Ku rather than from Chihriq.

²⁶In the Book of the Seven Proofs

²⁷This does not correspond with the French translation, so it must identify the page in the original manuscript which Nicolas translated.

²⁸Nicolas footnote: *The Imam Mahdi, Who is none other than the Báb.*

²⁹In Nicolas' French translation, this pronoun is rendered in the feminine gender, but throughout this translation it is rendered in the male gender in order to accurately convey the intent of the author and harmonize with the conventions of the English language.

³⁰Nicolas footnote: *Otherwise put: even though I am myself this hidden descendant, I condescended to pass myself off first as a Precursor.*

³¹"The Bábí historian, Agha Mirza Jani" — cited as a source frequently by Nicolas in his biography of the Báb (6); described in a footnote in Balyuzi's biography of the Báb (17), p. 52 as "the first to attempt to write a history of the new theophany", and his full name given p. 174 as Haji Mirza Jani Kashani; supposed author of "Kitab-i Nuqtatu'l-Kaf, being the earliest history of the Bábis", published with English notes but without translation of the Persian text by E.G.Browne in 1910 (Leiden:Brill). Identified as a forgery or greatly adulterated by sectarians identified with Mirza Yahya, a pretender for leadership of the Bábis after the decease of the Báb, who demonstrated his desire to alter the historical record in order to bolster his candidacy, according to Mirza Abu'l Fadl Gulpaygani, H.M.Balyuzi and other scholars. A highly controversial work.

³²Nicolas asserts that the Comte de Gobineau (see footnote 14) identifies the Báb's revelation of His station as the Imam Mahdi and His rejection of His title of Báb with the very beginning of His mission, in Shiraz. It is clear from a number of sources that the Báb did not assume the title of Imam Mahdi until very late in His mission, and certainly did not do so during His residence in Shiraz.

³³Nicolas quotes a passage from the Comte de Gobineau's book (see footnote 14).

³⁴"Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i" — according to his own account, quoted by Nabil-i-A'zam ("The Dawnbreakers", chapter III, British and US editions), on the same night that Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi assumed the title "Báb", He conferred upon His first believer, this same Mulla Husayn, the title "Bábu'l-Báb".

³⁵Nicolas footnote: *The book of Monsieur de Gobineau swarms with errors. The historical part of his work is nothing other than a very elegant but almost always literal translation of the "Nasikh et-tevarikh" and of the "Ruzet es-Sefá".* [These are the court histories respectively of Muhammad Shah and Nasiri'd-Din Shah.] *Not a single report of Bábí origin is given therein, not an explanation is attempted therein of the movements of the new sect. One asks oneself, without being able to understand it, what the insurrections of Mazandaran signify. On the other hand, all of the Muslim calumnies against the Bábís have received an eager welcome therein, the doctrine, the beliefs, the customs of the new converts are absolutely disfigured[distorted] therein. One of the most beautiful examples of human solidarity given by people who are going to die and who know it[Bábís], is represented therein as an attempt of the sectarians[Bábís] to establish the reign of the community of possessions and of women!*[Nicolas encourages his reader to be sympathetic to the Báb and to His followers, to trust their own accounts of themselves over the calumnious and distorted accounts written by their enemies in the Muslim community.]

³⁶"A Prophet in the Nineteenth Century" — subtitle of "Seyyed 'Ali Mohammed dit le Báb", by A.L.M.Nicolas, published in Paris by Dujarric in 1905.

³⁷"Admirable precision and clarity" — Shoghi Effendi, in "God Passes By" (1944), p. 26 calls "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" "Remarkably lucid, admirable in its precision."

³⁸"Two verses of the Qur'án" — the first verse referred to: XVII:89 ("Say: If men and jinn combined to write the like of this Koran, they would surely fail to compose the like, though they helped one another as best they could", see Fifth Proof; the second verse referred to: III:5 ("and none knows its interpretation, save only God, and those firmly rooted in knowledge"), see Fifth Proof.

³⁹Qur'án, Surat al-Imran (III), verse 7, interpreted by Nicolas in a similar way to the English translation of Yusuf Ali: "but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge", in contrast to the renderings of various other translators: "yet none knoweth its interpretation but God. And the stable in knowledge..." (Rodwell), "None knoweth its explanation save Allah. And those who are of sound instruction..." (Pickthall), "but none know the interpretation of it except God. But those who are well grounded in knowledge..." (Palmer). Nicolas' interpretation corresponds with that of Baha'u'llah, as translated and interpreted by Shoghi Effendi, as the various citations of this verse also assume this form — "None knoweth the meaning thereof except God and them that are well-grounded in knowledge." (Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, pp. 17, 213, 255-256)

⁴⁰"Verse" — the verses referred to here and throughout "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" are called by Muslims "ay" (in singular and "ayat" in plural form) and "ay ad-dhikr", and they are regarded by Muslims as the very words

of God revealed to Muhammad and preserved in the "Qur'án". "Ay" also signifies "sign, miracle, marvel, masterpiece". Definitions of the Arabic word are from the Wehr/Cowan "Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic", translated and edited by J. Milton Cowan from the original German of Hans Wehr and published by Spoken Language Services, Ithaca, New York, 1976.

⁴¹Qur'án, VI:25; VIII:31; XVI:24; XXIII:83; XXV:5; XXVII:68; XLVI:17; LXVIII:15; LXXXIII:13

⁴²Qur'án, Surat al-Imran (III), verse 7.

⁴³Nicolas footnote: *Which certainly signifies here the Imams: for they alone possessed the science[knowledge] of which the door was closed at their disappearance.* [This is, of course a Shi'ite interpretation of this Qur'anic verse.]

⁴⁴"Psalms" — Nicolas is obviously (to a European Christian or Jewish reader) referring to the Book of Psalms, traditionally attributed (in major part) to the authorship of King David, and called "Tehilim" in the original Hebrew. The verse quoted here by Nicolas was not found in any of the Psalms by the English translator, and indeed the only use of "hidden treasure" discovered was the fourteenth verse of the seventeenth Psalm (17:14) — "From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their Bábés." (King James Version) This verse seems to bear no relationship to the one cited by Nicolas. The real source of this reference to the "hidden treasure" appears to be an Islamic tradition, which is not found in any of the standard collections of ahadith, but is referred to multiple times in the fourth volume of the "Mathnavi" of Jalalu'd-Din Rumi, and in the Writings of Baha'u'llah (P&M, pp. 48, 286 and possibly p. 321; TB, pp. 114, 140 and possibly pp. 47, 50, 77, 258; AHW, #3), and the theme of a commentary penned by 'Abdu'l-Baha in His youth (Tafsir-i-Hamsa Kansan Makhfiyyan).

⁴⁵"The Prophets, I am Them" — Nicolas quotes a "hadith" (tradition) related of the Prophet Muhammad, without identifying his source or the veracity of the statement made therein. Baha'u'llah, in "Kitab-i-Iqan" (US edition, 1970) seems to quote this "hadith" in two places: p. 152-53 ("Thus hath Muhammad, the Point of the Qur'án, revealed: 'I am all the Prophets.'") and p. 162 ("Hath not Muhammad, Himself, declared: 'I am all the Prophets?'"). The first of these two citations is also found in "Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah", US edition, 1971.

⁴⁶Meaning, "the miracles you boast for yourselves."

⁴⁷"Of a dead one a living one, of a living one a cadaver" — Jesus raises the only son of a widow living in the city of Nain, as described in the Gospel of Luke, 7:11-15—

11 And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with Him, and much people.

12 Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the

only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still and He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother.

Jesus equates spiritual death with physical death, as cited in the famous verses from the Gospel of Matthew, 8:21-22—

21 And another of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead.

It seems that these are the two occurrences to which Nicolas refers.

⁴⁸"Multi enim vocati, pauci vero electi" — Latin (Vulgate) version of the words of Jesus, known to English readers of the King James Version as follows: "for many be called, but few chosen" (Gospel of Matthew, 20:16).

⁴⁹The creature: feminine word in French.

⁵⁰"Hadith" — singular form of word, the plural being "ahadith", meaning variously "speech, small talk, conversation, interview, gossip, report, tale", and in this context the so-called "prophetic tradition, the narrative relating deeds and utterances of the Prophet Muhammad and His companions". There are two kinds of "ahadith" — "hadith qudsi" in which God speaks; and "hadith nabawi" in which Muhammad speaks. There are many thousands of "ahadith" in various collections, some of them edited by Sunnis and others by Shi'ites. Muhammad Azizullah "Glimpses of the Hadith", Karachi: Crescent Publications, 1980), a Sunni, writes that Imam Muslim (d. 161 A.H.) sifted through 300,000 "ahadith" and selected 9200 which he considered to be authentic while Imam Bukhari (d. 256 A.H.) identified only 7275 authentic "ahadith" out of some 600,000 that he reviewed. There are also collections of "ahadith" attributed to the Twelve Imams. The definitions of "hadith" cited here are derived from the Wehr/Cowan Dictionary.

⁵¹"Rules of Muslim scholarship" — this refers to the rules whereby Muslim scholars came to decisions about matters of Islamic doctrine and practice.

⁵²"Majlisi" is Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taqi Majlisi, compiler of "Bihar al-Anwar" (25 volumes, published in Tihran:1885-1897). Baha'u'llah quotes one hadith from "Bihar al-Anwar" in "Kitab-i-Iqan" (p. 243), not because He considers them to provide authoritative arguments in favor of the prophetic claims of the Báb, but in the following spirit (pp. 237, 256):

"Although We did not intend to make mention of the traditions of a bygone age, yet, because of Our love for thee, We will cite a few which are applicable to Our argument..."

"These things We mention only that the people may not be dismayed because of certain traditions and utterances, which have not yet been literally fulfilled, that they may rather attribute their perplexity to their own lack of understanding, and not to the non-fulfilment of the promises in the traditions, inasmuch as the meaning intended by the Imams of the Faith is not known by this people, as evidenced by the traditions themselves."

⁵³"The priests of Moses" — Moses was commanded by God in the Torah to appoint two kinds of ministers to the service of God on behalf of the Hebraic people: the "kohanim", who are the priests who serve in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple; and the "leviim", who are assistants to the priests but not permitted into the inner sanctum of either the Tabernacle or the Temple, who provide the music (vocal and instrumental) of the Temple, and carry out many other specific duties.

⁵⁴"The Person Who claimed this title" — Did Jesus claim to be a divine messenger? Very definitely we can affirm He did and we are able to cite many specific references in support of such an affirmation.

⁵⁵Did Jesus claim to be descended from King David? Jesus did not make this claim Himself. The Gospel of Matthew states that Jesus was descended from King David through His father Joseph (1:1-16), and the Gospel of Luke makes the same statement but with a different geneology (3:23-31f); also, in the Gospel of John (6:42), Joseph is identified as the father of Jesus. But the Gospels of Matthew and Luke specifically state that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, that He was conceived in His mother Mary by the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:18,20; Luke 1:35), and consequently His patrilineal descent from David seems to be tenuous at best.

⁵⁶This controversy between the Catholic Church and the Jews is not elaborated by Nicolas, and the reader may wish to know in more detail the clashing approaches to the interpretation of prophecy in the Catholic and Jewish traditions. For fulfillment of this aim the reader is invited to study those reference works on this subject to be found in most university libraries and many large public libraries and generally identified as Interpreter's Dictionaries and Religious Encyclopedias.

⁵⁷Promised Ahmad — this refers to the Qur'án, Surat al-Saff (LXI:6):

And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you confirming the Law which came before me, and giving glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, "This is evident sorcery!"

⁵⁸"The strong expression of the Gospel" — This is not an expression of the Gospel but rather it is a proverb quoted by Peter, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus in his Second Epistle General (2:22): But as it happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Peter is quoting one of the proverbs from the Book of Proverbs, called "mishlei" in Hebrew and attributed traditionally to King Solomon, from the twenty-sixth

chapter and eleventh verse (26:11): As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

⁵⁹"The argument of the Báb is new and original" — Shoghi Effendi, in "God Passes By" (1), p. 26, once again agrees with the assessment of Nicolas, calling "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih", "original in conception".

⁶⁰Nicolas footnote: *The Báb here, to render more energetically His thought, employs the superlative form of "Ferd", the Unique.*

⁶¹"All splendour comes from God" — according to the Persian/Arabic text of "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" published in lithograph and found at the New York Public Research Library, Oriental Division (*OGI 76-1406), the opening invocation to the Persian "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" includes these words: "wa-anma al-baha' min allah", meaning, "and all the splendour [is] from Allah[God]".

⁶²Nicolas footnote: *We will see in the course of this work the entire significance of this expression: "Him Whom God shall make manifest".*

⁶³"This Manifestation" is the Báb. The word used is "z.uhúr".

⁶⁴Alvah akvániyyih va amkániyyih

⁶⁵Nicolas footnote: *All the material objects of this lower-world transformed into tablets [upon which one might write] could not suffice to contain all the proofs of the truth of this manifestation, that is to say that everything that exists materially forms an order of proofs, the other order[of proofs] being composed of proofs from the moral world[world of morality].*

⁶⁶Nicolas footnote: *The summary of this discourse, and the aim that it endeavours to demonstrate are...*

⁶⁷Nicolas footnote: *Not one of the Qualifications or Names that we give to God can present, even from a great distance, a semblance of exactitude. The Good, the Strong, the Merciful, these are qualities which we find in our own nature: We apply them to Him but they cannot define Him and furthermore we cannot comprehend them ourselves [for] as soon as we push[extend] them to infinity, infinity in Goodness is as incomprehensible to us as infinity in space...As for after infinity, infinity begins again. God is so much above us that it is almost a blasphemy to believe oneself able to imagine Him in comparison with our own nature.*

⁶⁸Nicolas footnote: *Creator, that is also a qualification, which, like all those that we can find in the feebleness of our intelligences must be pushed to the infinite[in order to apply to God]. The Christian religion and the Muslim one accord this attribute to God at a given moment and rob it from Him for everything that has preceded or followed this moment. But that is a false conceptual foundation: God has created since the beginning for which there is no beginning, He creates and will create even until the end for which there is no end. If there was a cessation[stoppage/interruption] in His power as Creator, there would be a cessation in the manifestation of His goodness, as moreover in the manifestation of all of His attributes. He has indeed created the world to know Him and the knowledge of God is the aim, the first*

cause and the final cause of the [created] being: that is the kindness[of the Creator bestowed on His creation]. If thus a definitive disappearance was, in whatever space of time, assigned to creation, the Kindness of God, that is to say His Goodness, would no longer have [a] place to manifest itself. God would therefore have no longer a reason to be, therefore He would no longer exist, which is impossible.

⁶⁹Imkán.

⁷⁰Nicolas footnote: *Humanity follows an ascending path towards the light. This law of Progress, inscribed from the beginning, in the destinies of man [,] could not manifest itself except by a very slow progression in science[knowledge]. Humanity was weaned at the epoch of Adam [,] who is, not the first man, but the first Prophet. Even as the stomach of the child is, by degrees, habituated to the strong aliments of the adult age, even so the brain of man received at each celestial revelation (appearances of the various prophets) only a part of the divine nourishment. It is only when humanity had digested the bread given by a Prophet that God sent to them a new one, charged with enlarging the circle of human knowledge. To say that there will be no longer a Prophet, this would be to claim that man has arrived at perfection and that he has penetrated the secrets of the Divine Nature. We have only to cast a glance upon ourselves to verify the inanity and the self-conceit of such an affirmation. It is against this that the Báb rises up, and He comes in His turn to bring His stone to the edifice of which He had continued to build under the diverse names which men gave [to] Him: Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad. But the instruction which He gives today, if it is superior to that which He gave under the features [in the appearance] of the Arabian Prophet, [it] is nonetheless not at all complete and definitive. Humanity must, in its turn, digest the new notions which He gives, and, when it will have assimilated them [then] will appear "Him Whom God shall make manifest". In His turn He will enlarge the circle of the knowledge given by Mirza 'Ali Muhammad [the Báb], then [He] will be followed in His turn, by other 'min yudhhur'u'llah'[plural].*

⁷¹Ocean of Names—TBD.

⁷²Ocean of Creation—TBD.

⁷³Nicolas footnote: *[first] 'Dhikr'. It is the first emanation from God: here is how religious philosophy expresses itself on this subject. When a man forms the project of building a house, he thinks to arrange it following a certain plan: the house thus rises "living", so to speak [,] in his imagination. It is permissible for us to say that this house exists, because it lives,[—] in the domain of thought it is true,[—] but it is[exists]. On the other hand we can also very well say that it does not exist, for it has neither length, nor width, nor thickness, in one word none of the qualities of matter. This house if it comes to be built, we can say[affirm] or deny that it is the [house] which existed in the imagination. It is identically the same for God: As long as He has not built the world, His existence remains unknown, He is pure of all names and of all attributes. He exists, because He is of all time[timeless], but the manifestation of His existence has not yet made itself. Suddenly He[God] wants to create, that is to say to radiate upon the world. His aim is to accord the blessings of His knowledge upon His creature and, before all, to assure the propagation of this blessing: from this primal necessity follows the creation of the prophets, or, more exactly, of Prophethood. This is this first creation, this prophethood which one names the First Dhikr.*

The First Dhikr is in tight connection with the Creator: indeed, He participates in His Qualities and in His Power. In order for one to understand [this], it is sufficient to compare creation to the phenomenon which is produced when one lights a lamp. The ray which is the closest to the luminous source is incontestably the most brilliant, the most pure, the most charged with the special qualities of the light. From undulations to undulations indeed the luminosity of the effluvium diminishes to arrive at[result in] entirely disappearing. And so, this first undulation, so close to the flame that it seems to be confused with it, exactly represents the rapport that exists between the [reality of] Prophethood and [the reality of] God. Furthermore, it is easy for one to imagine that the rank assigned to the intermediaries between God and man [would] be superior to the rank assigned to humanity. In pursuing this analogy, we would be struck [by a realization] that the lamp is composed essentially of two things: the oil, the flame. But the oil which exists [remains] unknown to us until it manifests itself by a phenomenon which strikes our senses: the flame. This flame is the manifestation of the existence of the oil, and it strikes our senses by the intermediary of the first undulation which it projects; without this first undulation the light would not exist. It is sound also to say that if the flame did not exist, the first undulation would not exist either, but this precisely demonstrates that the existence of these two phenomena are indissolubly linked the one to the other.

We have seen that the first undulation is towards[in relation to] the flame what Prophethood is to God, but we can press[come] closer [than] this example and compare the flame to the first Dhikr and the oil to God. In effect, we have already said this, without the flame the oil would remain unknown to us: but what is the flame if not the oil itself? It has neither the same form, nor the same appearance, nor the same qualities but it is no less true that the two things are one.

⁷⁴The Báb uses the image of the Sun as the symbol par excellence for the Manifestation of God, and this symbol is taken up by Baha'u'llah and by 'Abdu'l-Baha.

⁷⁵Nicolas footnote: *We have seen, in the preceding note [footnote 73], that the First Dhikr is Prophethood. It is very evident that in similar substance [fashion] the individuality of the Prophet matters little, and one can say that in the eyes of reason, it does not change. Even as the sun which rises in the Orient since the beginning of the world is that which shines today and will shine tomorrow, thus the Prophet since His first manifestation has remained the same. If, in its annual revolution, the sun traverses the different points of the sky which we have designated under the diverse names of the signs of the zodiac, it is the same for Prophethood. The names of the Prophets are no other than the names of the stations which the [station of] Prophethood, incarnating itself, made in humanity. Adam, or to render more exactly the thought of the Báb, the first incarnation of Prophethood known under the name of Adam, was perfect in itself: it was the First Dhikr and it has the complete knowledge of the secrets of the Divine Nature: but it had to adapt its teaching to the state of the childhood of humanity, reserving itself to manifest anew after the passing of centuries when man, having digested the first lessons received, would be apt to receive new ones: therefore a second incarnation took place. That men, at this epoch, had given to this one whom they considered as a new divine messenger the name of Noah, the mistake is not ascribable except to[to anyone but] them and to their ignorance [,] and not to God or to the Prophet. If These Ones have not immediately enlightened the creatures upon this fundamental point, it is that they*

had lots of other truths to have them know first. To open to humanity with a single move the curtain which covers the splendour of God, this would have blinded man and destroyed creation. Moses Himself, incarnation of Prophethood, could not contemplate God upon Sinai, because He [Moses] was clothed in a body identical to ours.

Perhaps we could say that this lower-world is a college: the Professors are the incarnations of Science: each One of them makes [creates] for us, in His class a course proportioned to our intelligence and not to His science, which is perfect. These Gentlemen pretend to carry each one an individual name but they deceive, for, in their functions, they name themselves Grammar, History, Geography, which themselves are Science. It is of course M.X. who gives the course in philosophy, but philosophy would exist no less if M.X. disappeared.

⁷⁶13,000 years old—TBD.

⁷⁷Nicolas footnote: *The Point of the Explanation [Exposition], which is to say the Báb Himself.*

⁷⁸Nicolas footnote: *Muhammad.*

⁷⁹"The Prophets, that's Me" — The Báb quotes a "hadith" (tradition) related of the Prophet Muhammad, and by doing so, He appears to validate the content of this hadith. Baha'u'llah, in "Kitab-i-Iqan" (US edition, 1970) likewise quotes this "hadith" in two places: p. 152-53 ("Thus hath Muhammad, the Point of the Qur'án, revealed: 'I am all the Prophets.'") and p. 162 ("Hath not Muhammad, Himself, declared: 'I am all the Prophets?'"). The first of these two citations is also found in "Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah", US edition, 1971.

⁸⁰Nicolas footnote: *That is to say the First Dhikr, Prophethood.*

⁸¹Nicolas footnote: *We know that in the beginning [of His mission] Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad made Himself pass as this Messiah.* [see Preface, p. IV, where Nicolas cites Mirza Jani's attestation that the Báb did not identify Himself with the Imam Mahdi until the last days of His imprisonment in the fortress of Chihriq, which would have been at the very end of His mission rather than at the beginning thereof.]

⁸²Nicolas footnote: Sixth Imam [of the Twelve Imams recognized by most Persian Muslims].

⁸³Chit in the French translation — the Biblical "Seth".

⁸⁴Shimon — Simon Peter in the Gospels, the "first and foremost" among the disciples of Jesus.

⁸⁵Nicolas footnote: *'Ali* [First of the Twelve Imams...] 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, son of the uncle of Muhammad, Abu Talib; born in Mecca, orphaned as a young boy and adopted by Muhammad; first male believer in the prophethood of Muhammad; later betrothed to Fatima Zahra, the daughter of Muhammad. According to the Shi'a he was appointed Imam and leader of the Muslims by Muhammad on his deathbed. He was elected caliph after three others — Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman — in 656 CE. He was faced with the open rebellion of Mu'awiyah in Syria and the Khariji in 'Iraq, and in 661 CE he was assassinated and

buried in Kufa. His sons Hasan and Husayn were selected as his successors by those loyal to his leadership, then and thereafter called shi'a or shi'i.

⁸⁶Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (c. 625-669 CE) was the firstborn grandson of Muhammad, and first son of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatima Zahra. Some of the Shi'a recognize Hasan as the second Imam, whilst others recognize his brother Husayn as the second Imam. The name Hasan means "handsome" in Arabic. Upon the death of the Imam 'Ali, many residents of Kufa and the adjacent communities swore allegiance to the 36 year old Hasan, making him the successor to his father. This put him in conflict with Mu'awiyah, who usurped the caliphate upon the death of 'Ali, the fourth caliph. Mu'awiyah prepared his military forces to crush the Imam Hasan, while at the same time sending him letters urging that he give up his claim to leadership of the Muslim community. The armies loyal to Hasan and Mu'awiyah fought a series of battles and eventually the Imam Hasan renounced his claim to the caliphate in order to heal divisions among professed Muslims. The Imam Hasan retired to Medina and was given a pension by Mu'awiyah. When Mu'awiyah asked the Imam Hasan to assist him with armies loyal to him in quelling a rebellion of the Khariji, who had been responsible for assassinating his father, the Imam 'Ali, the Imam Hasan refused, indicating that he had renounced war for the sake of making peace. The Imam died in Medina in 669 CE, the victim of poisoning according to some accounts.

⁸⁷Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (c. 626-680 CE) was the second born grandson Muhammad, and the second son of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatima Zahra. Some of the Shi'a recognize Husayn as the second Imam, whilst others recognize his older brother Hasan as the second Imam. After the death of his father 'Ali in 661 CE, according to the Ithna 'Ashari (Twelver) Shi'i, Husayn's elder brother Hasan was chosen as the second Imam. When Hasan died eight years later, at 44 years of age, Husayn was designated the third Imam and he took up his claim to the caliphate, claiming that it was his by right, and that it could not be exercised by the corrupt and profligate Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah. The Imam Husayn led an insurrection, and to his standard flocked many of the people of 'Iraq. In the course of doing battle with Yazid's army in Karbala, he was betrayed by some of those who pretended to be his friends and who had come to his aid. The Imam Husayn and most of his family were massacred at the battle. The third Imam was himself decapitated and his head delivered to Yazid. The body of the Imam Husayn is buried in Karbala, and his head is buried in Egypt.

⁸⁸First Imam: 'Ali ibn-i-Abi Talib (d. AH 40/661 CE); Second Imam: Hasan, son of 'Ali and Fatimih (d. AH 50/670 CE); Third Imam: Husayn, son of 'Ali and Fatimih (d. 61/680 CE); Fourth Imam: 'Ali, son of Husayn and Shahribanu, called Zaynu'l-'Abidin and Imam Sajjad (d. AH 94/712 CE); Fifth Imam: Muhammad-Baqir, son of Zaynu'l-'Abidin and Fatimih bint al-Hasan, called Umm-i-'Abdu'llah (d. AH 113/732 CE); Sixth Imam: Ja'far-i-Sadiq, son of Muhammad-Baqir and Umm-i-Farwah (d. AH 148/765 CE); Seventh Imam: Musa-Kazim, son of Ja'far-i-Sadiq and Hamida Khatun (d. AH 183/799 CE); Eighth Imam: 'Ali ibn-i-Musa'r-Rida, called Imam Rida, son of Musa-Kazim and Umm Banin Najma (d. AH 203/817 CE); Ninth Imam: Muhammad-Taqi, called at-Taqi and al-Jawad, son of Imam Rida and Sabikah or Khayzuran (d. AH 220/835 CE); Tenth Imam: 'Ali-Naqi, called an-Naqi and al-Hadi, son of Muhammad-Taqi and Sumanah (d. AH 254/868 CE); Eleventh Imam: Hasan-i-'Askari, son of 'Ali Naqi

and Hadithah or Susan (d. AH 260/874 CE); Twelfth Imam: Muhammad, called Imam Mahdi, Imam-i-'Asr, Hujjatu'llah, Baqiyyatu'llah, Qa'im, Sahibu'z-Zaman, son of Hasan-i-'Askari and Nargis Khatun (d.c. AH 329/939 CE)

⁸⁹Nicolas footnote: *The Báb makes allusion here to the following verses of the Qur'án:*

If you have doubts regarding the Book which We have sent to Our servant, produce a chapter in the leastsimilar to those which it encloses and call, if you are sincere your witnesses, those which you invokebeside God. But if you do not do this, and for sure you will not do so, fear again [for] the fire prepared for the infidels, the fire of which men and rocks will be the fuel. [If you doubt what We have revealed to Our servant, produce one chapter comparable to it. Call upon your idols to assist you, if what you say be true. But if you fail (as you are sure to fail) then guard yourselves against the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the unbelievers.] (Qur'án, II:23)

They say: it is he (Muhammad) who has invented it? Reply to them: 'Compose then a single chapter like this: call to it all those whom you can, save God,if you are sincere.' [If they say: 'He invented it himself,' say: 'Bring me one chapter like it. Call on whom you may besides God to help you, if what you say be true!'] (Qur'án, X:38)

They will say: he has invented himself the Qur'án? It is rather that he does not believe. That they produce then themselves a similar work if they are sincere. [no parallel text could be traced] (Qur'án, 411-33-34)

[If they say: 'He has invented it himself,' say to them: 'Produce ten invented chapters like it. Call on whom you will among your idols, if what you say be true. But if they fail you, know that it is revealed with God's knowledge, and that there is no god but Him. Will you then accept Islam?'] [Qur'án, 11:13-14]

⁹⁰The Báb calculates 1270 years between the commencement of Muhammad's mission and the commencement of His own ministry; He begins the mission of Muhammad ten years before the Hijra, whence commences the Islamic calendar. Hijra, the celebrated flight of Muhammad from Mecca to Madina took place in June or September in the year 622 A.D. Between that time and 23 May 1844 A.D. there passed 1222 solar years and 1260 lunar years; as the Islamic calendar is made up of lunar years, the year 1844 corresponds to the Islamic (Hijra) year 1260. According to Sir John Glubb ("The Life and Times of Muhammad", New York: Stein and Day, 1971, passim.), Muhammad began to preach publicly, to proclaim His message and His mission in the year 613 A.D., three years after He received His "call" from God through the angel Gabriel. The Báb must be calculating the 1270 lunar years between the beginning of Muhammad's mission and the beginning of His own mission from the public proclamation of Muhammad circa 613 A.D. to the public proclamation of the Báb in 1844 A.D. While this would appear to comprise 1269 years rather than 1270 years, due to the lunar Hijra calendar this period can be understood as comprising 1270 years. For more precise information, please refer to technical works on the

correspondence between Gregorian solar and Hijra lunar calendars.

⁹¹Nicolas footnote: *Even as the teaching brought by the preceeding Prophets was proportioned to the forces of humanity, even so the proofs of their mission were adapted to the human intelligence of their epoch. A child is struck only by visible images, also the first prophets seized their ears[attracted their attention] by means of a material order of prodigies[marvels]. The science of terretrial phenomena having made progress in the epoch of Moses, God gave to this prophet a rod by the aid of which He controlled the elements: He was the absolute master of all the Powers of the earth. After Him, humanity having further progressed, these prodigies no longer sufficed: the Christ appeared in the epoch in which medicine was honored: He was given the breath by aid of which He resuscitated cadavers: it is scarcely necessary to say that this gift was superior to that which Moses had received for, in the resurrection of bodies the divine world is directly interested[involved] and sends[back to earth], upon the request of the Prophet, the soul which He[God, the divine world] had already received. Finally humanity having, by Jesus, almost arrived at extricating itself from the errors of matter, the next Prophet no longer needed to address Himself except to [anything but] intelligence, I was going to say to intellectuals. It is thus through eloquence that He had to shine and this [eloquence] had to be divine: it is so in the Qur'án because it is the work of God, and created, according to the Shi'ites before all of creation: it would be the synthesis of Prophethood, the First Dhikr materialized. The Shi'ites think that Muhammad was the last of the Prophets: He seems to say so in His Qur'án, but those who interpret it so do not catch the inner meaning of the word of God. We have already had occasion to occupy ourselves with this question, we will not return to it. Hence the cycle of prophethood remains open. But God had sent Muhammad only to announce to men that the future celestial envoys would be stripped of the ability to carry out what the vulgar herd was obstinate in calling miracles. The only miracle from henceforth, the only proof that a Prophet will bring with Him of His mission, this will be the verse. Humanity had admitted[accepted] this proof, it had been educated in the conviction that it is the most divine of prodigies and it is when this notion was deeply anchored in the spirits[of men], when it had become the sovereign dogma that the Báb was manifested, gifted with the power to cause to descend verses from heaven.*

⁹²Nicolas footnote: *The Shi'ites.*

⁹³Nicolas footnote: *Humanity has thus understood [from] henceforth the intellectual proof of the mission of an envoy from God: it is the proof so sublime that it is divine. I bring, myself, today this divine proof. What else do you have need of and why do you ask from me miracles of a material order, good [only] for humanity in its state of childhood? I give you what there is that is most sublime, why do you ask of me something inferior?*

⁹⁴Nicolas footnote: *As concise as is in general the manner of expressing Himself of our Author, His thought does not reveal itself any less clearly from the texts for the reader habituated to this gymnastic. The Báb says here to His questioner: "God Himself has made you know that the verses are the highest proof of the mission of a Prophet; you have accepted without questioning this fundamental idea, also you believe in Muhammad and in Islam. But even as you believe in Muhammad the revealer of verses you must believe in Me Who reveal those [verses] equally[identically]. I do not speak of this to you in any*

other manner for I do not discuss with you except in applying Myself upon the very dogmas which you [already] believe. If you wish to rise up against Me, do so, but it is for you to prove that I am a false prophet. Meanwhile, wherever you conduct your discussion, know well that you cannot attack this proof by the verses[of the Qur'án or the Bayán]. Everything that you would say in this manner against Me would return against Muhammad and you thereby would attack the religion which you claim to defend.

⁹⁵Nicolas footnote: *Of the truth of My mission.*

⁹⁶Nicolas footnote: *Everyone knows that the Qur'án recognizes in the Christ the greatest of the Prophets: only Muhammad surpasses Him. There are two great proofs of this, the one intellectual, the other material. The intellectual one is that, as we have seen, each prophet enlarged the instruction given by His immediate predecessor: Muhammad coming after Jesus and revealing a larger portion of the divine secrets had to be, by the very fact thereof [of doing so], superior to Him[Jesus]. The material proof is in the existence of the Qur'án: indeed, the prodigies accomplished by Moses were transitory, there is not left today any trace thereof, except in the memory of men. Jesus surely resuscitated a cadaver, but it was only for a certain time, and the body, one moment reanimated, fell again into death. The Miracle of Muhammad is on the contrary eternal in duration: it was not produced only during the life of the Prophet to disappear after Him [His ascension], it exists still, it manifests itself every day and it will manifest itself until the end of the ages.*

⁹⁷Qur'anic testimonies:

If you have doubts regarding the Book which We have sent to Our servant, produce a chapter in the least similar to those which it encloses and call, if you are sincere your witnesses, those which you invoke beside God. But if you do not do this, and for sure you will not do so, fear again [for] the fire prepared for the infidels, the fire of which men and rocks will be the fuel. If you doubt what We have revealed to Our servant, produce one chapter comparable to it. Call upon your idols to assist you, if what you say be true. But if you fail (as you are sure to fail) then guard yourselves against the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the unbelievers. (Qur'án, II:23)

They say: it is he (Muhammad) who has invented it? Reply to them: 'Compose then a single chapter like this: call to it all those whom you can, save God, if you are sincere.' If they say: 'He invented it himself,' say: 'Bring me one chapter like it. Call on whom you may besides God to help you, if what you say be true!' (Qur'án, X:38)

If they say: 'He has invented it himself,' say to them: 'Produce ten invented chapters like it. Call on whom you will among your idols, if what you say be true. But if they fail you, know that it is revealed with God's knowledge, and that there is no god but Him. Will you then accept Islam?' (Qur'án, 11:13-14)

⁹⁸This verse was not discovered. However, the Qur'án makes similar statements that were identified:

Say, If mankind and the jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Qur'án, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another. (Qur'án 17:89)

O men, a similitude is set forth, so listen to it. Surely, those on whom you call instead of God cannot create even a fly, though they combine together for the purpose. And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they cannot recover it therefrom. Weak indeed are both the seeker and the sought. (Qur'án 22:73)

⁹⁹Bayán is the generic term the Báb uses to refer to all of his writings. It is also the title of two books — the Bayán al-'arabiyya (Arabic Bayán) and the Bayán-i-farsi (Persian Bayán), both authored in Mah-Ku in 1848.

¹⁰⁰Nicolas footnote: *The Báb in all of this passage depends upon the verses of the Qur'án which we have already cited. He also makes allusion to these verses:*

It is not the demons who have brought the Qur'án from heaven; this would not suit them and they would not have able to do so; they are even deprived of the right to hear it in heaven. (Qur'án XXVI:210-212)

There can thus be no doubt about this for a Muslim: the Qur'án was created by God, men and demons are incapable of producing even a single verse: hence, whatever is a verse, is the work of God. That[Hence] if you say that I am Myself the Author, you ascribe a lie to the Qur'án which has foreseen your objection; but, if He had not done so[foreseen your objection], that God is the master of the events of this world [is evident]: if He gave to the Prophets Whom He sent proofs of their mission, it is impossible that He did not unmask every charlatan who wished to pass himself off as sent by Him, risking thus the success of His work of salvation. How from then on could He permit a false prophet to produce verses which, by definition, are [of] divine manufacture? On the contrary, He would paralyze the hand that wished to write them, the tongue that wished to speak them, the brain that wanted to compose them before such a blasphemy could take place. Furthermore, since you believe in the divinity of the verses, because they are the work of God, because men and demons would be incapable of producing them, how can you say that if I produce them, they do not come from heaven?

¹⁰¹Nicolas footnote: *Truly must God give you another Proof of the Divinity of whatsoever mission and particularly of Mine, other than that which He fixed Himself for Eternity, that is to say the verses?*

¹⁰²Nicolas footnote: *The books of Moses were never presented as proof of His mission. The miracles, that is to say this proof [of His mission] were due to His rod. the Gospels of Jesus are the simple collection of His acts and of His words: that which constituted His miracles coming to support His prophetic mission, this was His breath resuscitating the dead. Each one of them had furthermore been predicted by His predecessor. For Muhammad, the proof that He is sent by God, is found first and before all [else] in the prediction that Jesus made, in the Gospels of His coming. That should have sufficed, but God, to spare[save] the future gave Him the Qur'án. He was thus deprived of the gift of inferior miracles, but He*

brought a Book of which the reading alone demonstrated its divine origin. He elevated thus human thought to the spectacle of the very works of Divinity, and He prepared also the terrain for His successors, for once the Qur'án, that is to say the verses, [were] admitted as coming directly from the celestial world, the following[succeeding] prophets had only to present such [verses] in their turn to be immediately recognized. They need no longer preoccupy themselves [in order] to prove their mission: their language suffices because they express themselves in verses. Thus the great ones of the nation must submit themselves and bring about the consent of the others, for it is not for the 'vulgum pecus' that the verses descend from heaven upon the earth. The lower people have only to act as it[they] has[have] since the origin of the world, that is to say to follow the movement. For finally only a few men saw the miracles of the Christ and believed in Him, the others did not become Christians except through the testimony of these eye-witnesses. It was the same for Muhammad with this difference that His miracle is produced continually: but for whom? For the [ones with] high intelligences and also they must be versed in the science of the Arabic language. A Persian who knows in general very poorly his [own] language and Arabic not at all, how could he be struck by a miracle of which he cannot even suspect the nature? He is a Muslim only because of the example which is given him by the great ones and by following the universal consent. This is why the responsibility of the enlightened men is terrible, in the sense that they are not only the cause of their own damnation but also of that of thousands of individuals that their conversion would have restored to the straight path.

¹⁰³Nicolas footnote:

Elif.Lam.Mim. [Do] men imagine that they will be left tranquil, if only they say: We believe; and that they will not be put to the test? [Alif lam mim. Do men think that once they say: 'We are believers', they will be left alone and not be put to the test?] (Qur'án, XXIX:1)

¹⁰⁴Nicolas footnote:

There was a time when you had no book to recite, in which you would not have known how to trace a single line with your right hand. Oh! hence, those who negate the truth could doubt. [Never have you read a book before this, nor have you ever transcribed one with your right hand. Had you done either of these, the unbelievers might have doubted.] (Qur'án, XXIX:47)

¹⁰⁵Nicolas footnote: *We have already seen this, [that] the miracles of all of the previous prophets were transitory, [while] those of Muhammad, that is the verses, reproduce themselves every time that one opens His book. It is the same for those of the Báb which consist of the Bayán. One must know that the invention of the alphabet, is divine work for God prepared in this way, for the future, the manifestation of the most sublime of the miracles: take note that men made use of the letters placed in this way at their disposition: when have they made verses: never before Muhammad, never after Him. The Báb appears in His turn, He causes them [verses] to descend from heaven, [so] what veil thus blinds the eyes of men who do not believe in Him?*

¹⁰⁶Qur'án, XXIX:50; Nicolas; [Dawood] translations.

¹⁰⁷Qur'án, XVII:90-92, Nicolas; Dawood translations: Night Journey, "laylat al-mi'raj" — an experience of the Prophet Muhammad is alluded to, it is believed, in the Qur'án:

Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night, from the Holy Mosque to the Furthest Mosque, the precincts of which We have blessed, so that We might show Him some of Our signs. Surely He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (Surat al-Isra', 17:1)

Much more detailed accounts of this experience are found in the hadith collections, including "Sahih Muslim", which was compiled in the mid-800s CE by Abu al-Husayn Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri, who was known as Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (c. 817-875 CE). In that collection (Sahih), a hadith narrated on the authority of Anas ibn Malik, a contemporary of the Prophet Muhammad, is related as follows (<http://www.noblesanctuary.com/miraj.html>):

"I was brought *al-buraq* who is an animal white and long, larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule, who would place its hoof at a distance equal to the range of vision. I mounted it and came to Bait-al Maqdis (Jerusalem). I then tethered it to the ring used by the prophets. I entered the area of the Mosque and prayed two rak'at in it. I then came out and Gabriel brought me a vessel of wine and a vessel of milk. I chose the milk, and Gabriel said, 'You have chosen al-fitra, the natural way'.

"He then ascended with me into the lower heavens and requested that they be opened. It was said: 'Who are you?' He responded: 'Gabriel'. It was then said: 'Who is with you?' He responded: 'Muhammad'. It was then said: 'Has revelation been sent to him?' He responded: 'Revelation has been sent to him'. It was then opened for us and there I was with Adam. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being.

"Then we ascended to the second heaven and Gabriel requested that it be opened. It was said: 'Who are you?' He responded: 'Gabriel. It was then said: 'Who is with you?' He responded: 'Muhammad'. It was then said: 'Has revelation been sent to him?' He responded: 'Revelation has been sent to him'. It was then opened for us and when I entered Jesus and John welcomed me and prayed for my well-being.

"Gabriel then ascended with me to the third heaven and requested that it be opened. It was said: 'Who are you?' He responded: 'Gabriel'. It was then said: 'Who is with you?' He responded: 'Muhammad'. It was then said: 'Has revelation been sent to him?' He responded: 'Revelation has been sent to him'. It was then opened for us and there I was with Joseph, who was given a great portion of beauty. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being.

"Gabriel then ascended with me to the fourth heaven and requested that it be opened. It was said: 'Who are you?' He responded: 'Gabriel'. It was then said: 'Who is with you?' He responded: 'Muhammad'. It was then said: 'Has revelation been sent to him?' He responded: 'Revelation has been sent to him'. It was then opened for us and there I was with Enoch. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being.

"Gabriel then ascended with me to the fifth heaven and requested that it be opened. It was said: 'Who are you?' He responded: 'Gabriel'. It was then said: 'Who is with you?' He responded: 'Muhammad'. It was

then said: 'Has revelation been sent to him?' He responded: 'Revelation has been sent to him'. It was then opened for us and there I was with Aaron. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being.

"Gabriel then ascended with me to the sixth heaven and requested that it be opened. It was said: 'Who are you?' He responded: 'Gabriel'. It was then said: 'Who is with you?' He responded: 'Muhammad'. It was then said: 'Has revelation been sent to him?' He responded: 'Revelation has been sent to him'. It was then opened for us and there I was with Moses. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being.

"Gabriel then ascended with me to the seventh heaven and requested that it be opened. It was said: 'Who are you?' He responded: 'Gabriel'. It was then said: 'Who is with you?' He responded: 'Muhammad'. It was then said: 'Has revelation been sent to him?' He responded: 'Revelation has been sent to him'. It was then opened for us and there I was with Abraham who was leaning against the bayt al-ma`mur into which enter seventy thousand angels each day never to return.

"Then I was brought to the sidrat al-muntaha, the Lote Tree of the Furthest Limit, whose leaves were like the ears of an elephant and whose fruits at first appeared insignificant. But when Allah spread His command over them they transformed to the point where no one in creation could describe their beauty. Then Allah revealed what He revealed to me. He then made obligatory for me fifty prayers every night and day.

"I began my descent until I reached Moses who asked me: 'What has your Lord made obligatory for your community?' I said to him, 'Fifty prayers.' He then said, 'Return to your Lord and ask Him to reduce them, your community will not be able to bear that. I know the people of Israel from long experience and I have tested them.' I then returned to my Lord and said, 'O Lord, make things lighter for my people'. He then reduced it by five prayers for me. I then returned to Moses and he said to me, 'Your community will not be able to stand that. So return and ask Him to make things lighter.' I kept going between my Lord and Moses until Allah said, 'O Muhammad, there are five prayers every night and day. Each prayer is equal to ten prayers making them equal to fifty prayers. Whoever intends a good deed and does not do it, there will be written for him a single good deed. If he does it then there will be written for him ten good deeds. Whoever intends an evil deed and does not do it then there is nothing written against him. If he does it then there is written for him one evil deed.'

"I then descended until I reached Moses and informed him of what had occurred. He then said to me, 'Return to your Lord and ask Him to make things lighter.' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace then said, 'I have returned to my Lord until I felt ashamed before Him.'

¹⁰⁸Nicolas footnote: *The slave of God, man. I was for a long time undecided upon the interpretation to give this passage. I believed at first that by the word slave, the Báb wished to speak of Himself and was saying from henceforth that He was not the master able to do everything that He wished. This seemed to conform to that which precedes and to that which follows this passage, but [this interpretation would have] placed between Him and Muhammad, according to the passage of the Qur'án cited here, too great a difference. Indeed, Muhammad here qualifies Himself as man and as envoy, the Báb could do no less.*

One must therefore understand in this way this passage: God gives as testimony of a mission whatever power He wishes to His envoy, and this testimony must suffice. The creatures, through the intermediary of their prophet, can not obtain everything extra[in addition] that they ask for. It is for God to decide whether He should accord[grant] this or not. But, as He wishes to test men (Qur'án, passim.) He refuses [to accord extra requests] most often and from then on these ones blame the Prophet. If God did not act in this way, if through the intermediary of His Prophet He gave to His creatures all that they asked for, not one, seeing his wish realized, would remain in unbelief: but then what merit would there be in believing in the Prophet and in obeying Him?

¹⁰⁹Qur'án, XVI:106, Nicolas; Dawood translations.

¹¹⁰Nicolas footnote: *You are [a] Muslim, you believe in God and you seek to please Him to find your salvation: so why do you act contrary to His orders? He says to you: "Muhammad does not have the gift of material miracles. The proof which I gave of His mission are the verses of the Qur'án. It is necessary then, that you believe in these verses without asking for something else; if you do not believe in them, a cruel chastisement is reserved for you." And so, I do not say something else to you Myself, and I bring as proof of My mission these verses in which you must believe. You ask from Me I do not know what miracle, the verses thus do not suffice you? In this case, you await the chastisement.*

¹¹¹Nicolas footnote: *Men never hold themselves to that which the Prophet says: they change at every instant the terrain of the discussion.*

¹¹²Qur'án, XX:47, Nicolas; Dawood translations.

¹¹³Nicolas footnote: *Here the Báb, from the Shi'ite point of view, enters into blasphemy and impiety. This phrase, indeed, is but a way of negating the miracles of the Prophet, and what miracles[!]: those which are mentioned even in the Qur'án, for, if He speaks here only of the cleft moon, He implies also the ascension of Muhammad to heaven. He does not even seek to give any explanation, disdainfully He says: God alone knows what these verses mean where it is a question of miracles. I negated[rejected] one day myself this miracle in speaking with a Mujtahid. He asked me the reason for my unbelief. I believed myself obligated to respond to him that as the moon did not shine upon Arabia alone, the other peoples would have been witnesses to this strange phenomenon. But no astronomer remarked upon it, no historian mentioned it. "It is," he answered me, "that, as you were infidels, God did not wish to show you His miracle. He amassed clouds around the moon in such fashion that it shined only upon that place where Muhammad and His companions were found: the miracle was visible only to them."*

¹¹⁴Qur'án, XVII:89, Nicolas; Dawood translations.

¹¹⁵Qur'án, LIV:1, Nicolas; Dawood translations.

¹¹⁶Qur'án, III:5, Nicolas; Arberry translations.

¹¹⁷Nicolas footnote: *For they would have believed in Me.*

¹¹⁸Nicolas footnote: *Otherwise called grace.*

¹¹⁹Nicolas footnote: *God created man to be known by him, He can not then allowe that he could be turned away, with His consent, from the way which He traced for him. In the epoch of the centuries of magic, the prophets were shown to be superior to the magicians, in the epoch in which medical science flowered[flourished], Jesus showed himself superior to the doctors, finally in the epoch of eloquence, Muhammad surpassed all of the poets: there could have been people who did not understand it[the superior eloquence of the Qur'án], but the fault is not imputable to God. If God, after having shown that not one human being, not one genius[spirit] was capable of producing the verses of which He made the proof of the mission of Muhammad, had [He] permitted a charlatan to produce such in his turn, He would deceive humanity in leaving them to believe in the veracity of this charlatan. He would commit in this way an error towards the creature, which is impossible.*

¹²⁰Nicolas footnote: *That is, discuss the verses. But you can not do so, for you would immediately become an infidel.*

¹²¹Nicolas footnote: *Allusion to the verses of the Qur'án already cited. Moreover, continuing his thought enunciated precedingly, the Báb challenges His adversary to find other proofs of the mission of Muhammad besides the Qur'án itself. "The Arab Prophet is not the Author of any miracle, He is purely and simply the Messenger Who has brought the Qur'án from the heavens. He never claimed to be anything else. I am identical to Him, and if it was ridiculous of His adversaries to ask for miracles from Him, it is the same for My own [adversaries] who demand them in their turn."*

¹²²Nicolas footnote: *The adversaries of Muhammad wrote odes of perfect beauty challenging Him to produce similar ones; their demand was stupid. It was for them, the miracle of Muhammad being this — to make verses descend from the heavens — to produce in their turn verses comparable or superior to those of Muhammad. Their powerlessness in their attempts to do so superabundantly demonstrates that the verse is divine work.*

¹²³This is the Báb's challenge to the learned and intelligent in every Dispensation — that they have the humility to detach themselves from acquired learning and natural intelligence and to judge the claims of the Manifestation on their own merits, rather than according to their human standards. Baha'u'llah very forcefully reiterates this principle in Kitab-i-Iqan and Kitab-i-Aqdas:

"...man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious... unless and until he ceases to regard the words and deeds of mortal men as a standard for the true understanding and recognition of God and His Prophets." (Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 3)

"...Revelation these mean and depraved people have sought to measure with their own deficient minds, their own deficient learning and understanding. Should it fail to conform to their standards, they straightway reject it." (Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 244)

"Hold ye fast unto His statutes and commandments, and be not of those who, following their idle fancies and vain imaginings, have clung to the standards fixed by their own selves, and cast behind their backs the standards laid down by God." (Baha'u'llah, Kitab-i-Aqdas, K17)

"Say: O leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring Balance established amongst men. In this most perfect Balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it." (Baha'u'llah, Kitab-i-Aqdas, K99)

¹²⁴Whatever comes from the powerless creature is of itself powerless.

¹²⁵Qur'án 12:26-57 and Genesis 39:20-23, Chapters 40 and 41.

¹²⁶Musa Ibn Ja'far, son of Ja'far al-Sadiq, known also as Musa al-Kazim, the seventh Imam of the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'i; imprisoned by the 'Abbasids in Baghdad, 'Iraq; died 799 CE, buried at Kazimayn.

¹²⁷The day on which the Imam Husayn was martyred is known as 'áshúrá' among the Shi'a. It is commemorated on the tenth day of Muharram, and is accounted a holy day by the Shi'a and Sunni alike. The Sunni commemorate it with fasting and for entirely different reasons than the Shi'a. They say that on this day Noah left the Ark and stepped out onto dry land, and that the observance was instituted by Ibrahim, the Hebrew patriarch Abraham. In Mecca, which is under the dominion of the Sunni, the Ka'aba is opened for visitors on this day.

¹²⁸From the context it is clear that the Báb is referring here to the Imam Husayn.

¹²⁹From the sentence following to the sentence ending with footnote 134, the text translated by Nicolas, which was found to have been modified from the original by its transcribers, has been replaced, in *italics*, with a fresh translation from the Persian original of a manuscript recently discovered in the Princeton University Library which conforms to the text preserved in the International Bahá'í Archives in Haifa. The original wording of this section, as translated by Nicolas, was as follows:

"Examine the people of David. This people was brought up during five hundred years with the rules of the Psalms to such a degree that finally it arrived at perfection in this religion. Then Jesus manifested himself. When He appeared, some of the followers of the Psalms believed in Him, while the others rejected Him. And so the two camps both believed their consciences to be right, and to be sure, neither one nor the other was motivated by an intention to blaspheme the Lord. It is exactly the same with you. You do not desire to stand against God either, perhaps on the contrary you search for certitude only to find the true Faith. Imagine for a moment that you are one of the people of David — if they had thought that Jesus was truly the Prophet predicted by the Psalms, all, without exception, would have believed in the truth of His mission and not a single one would

have remained a disbeliever.

"Lend me your attention for a moment upon this point: from the day of the Manifestation of David until that of today, 2270 years have transpired. But there still exist in our epoch people for whom religion is based on the Psalms and who imagine themselves to be in the path of God. This claim on their part is without value in the eyes of the Christians. What can it be worth in the eyes of God? If we examine the people of Moses, we can attest to the same phenomenon. During one thousand years, this people was raised in the Mosaic religion and it arrived finally at perfection therein. And then everything that Moses promised them regarding the Manifestation of Jesus after David took place."

¹³⁰The people of David are the followers of the Prophet David. In this case, it is the name of the Manifestation of God Who preceded Moses.

¹³¹Zabur is the Book of the Prophet David. In some manuscripts, including the manuscript of Dala'il-i-sab'ih translated by Nicolas, this text has been altered to identify Zabur as the Book of King David, who is called a prophet in the Qur'án. But the authentic text of Dala'il-i-sab'ih refers to a Prophet David Whose Book is the Zabur and Who precedes Moses, by 500 years.

¹³²According to the Báb, between the appearance of Moses and that of Himself, 2270 years have elapsed. He counts 1270 years from the declaration of Muhammad to His own declaration, and this would place Moses 1000 years before Muhammad, or approximately 400 BCE. This obviously does not correspond with historical chronology, but it may correlate to some concept of religious history known to the recipient of Dala'il-i-sab'ih, or it may have a symbolic meaning that was not known to Nicolas (and is not known to the present translator).

¹³³While the Báb cites 2270 years between Moses and his own advent, he also cites 1000 years between Moses and Jesus.

¹³⁴The Báb indicates that there were multiple prophecies of Moses regarding Jesus. If we are to reconcile this with the historical and Biblical record, we must suppose that the Báb is including prophecies of the minor prophets who appeared subsequent to Moses and not to Moses alone.

¹³⁵To attain certitude according to the Báb is to attain to recognition and "affirmation" of the new Manifestation of God upon His appearance.

¹³⁶The Báb counts 500 years between the appearance of Jesus and the appearance of Muhammad. The historical period was closer to 600 years, but this may relate to some historical model known to the original recipient of Dala'il-i-sab'ih or have a symbolic significance unknown to Nicolas.

¹³⁷Muhammad the Messenger of God.

¹³⁸Nicolas footnote: *It is indeed the conviction of all Muslims* [that Jesus specifically refers to Muhammad

in the Gospels and to indicate this] *they rely upon the prophecies concerning the Paraclete, which they translate from Periclitos [rather than Paraclitos]. Now the latter word corresponds to the Arabic word "Ahmad" [and hence Muhammad].*

¹³⁹Amir al-mu'minin, the leader of the believers, title given to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib by the Shi'i, and to all of the caliphs by the Sunni.

¹⁴⁰The purpose of the universe is the appearance of the Manifestation of God and His chosen ones.

¹⁴¹Prophet of God is the Mirror of God — the Mirror is a symbol referring to the Manifestation used by Baha'u'llah in *Gleanings* (p. 74), *Kitab-i-Iqan* (p. 142), *Summons* (p. 3); and 'Abdu'l-Baha in 'Abdu'l-Baha in *London* (p. 66), *Paris Talks* (pp. 26, 34), *Some Answered Questions* (pp. 113, 147, 206, 207) *Promulgation of Universal Peace* (pp. 114, 115, 173).

¹⁴²Nicolas footnote: *The Prophets have succeeded each other since the commencement of the centuries and will succeed each other until their consummation. Now, each one was attentive to warn those who walk in the path of God of the [future] appearance of His successor in terms intelligible to them. It follows then that if the teaching of Jesus is the complement of that of Moses, He is at the same time the preparation for that of Muhammad. Jesus sowed a seed of which the fruit must be mature at the appearance of the Rasul Allah, a this fruit is faith in Muhammad. It can happen that this seed falls upon bad ground — in this case it does not germinate and does not produce its fruit, as it was among the Christians who refused to become Muslims. But it can happen also that it germinates in favorable terrain, as was found in those who believed in Muhammad. Multi enim vocati, pauci vero electi. [Many are called, few are chosen. Matthew 20:16, 22:14]*

¹⁴³Nicolas footnote: *Muhammad.*

¹⁴⁴Nicolas footnote: *I attest to having searched for a long time [to discover] what the Báb meant to say by this "shoe of the donkey of Jesus". Over the course of three years my investigations ended only in showing me that all Shi'i believe us worshippers of this shoe. The explanation that I am going to give of it today may be fanciful, but as I was present myself at the conversation that I am going to report, I can only bear witness to the singular confusion which has been established between the donkey upon which our Lord [Jesus] was mounted when He entered Jerusalem, and the donkey of the Pope. The scene takes place in one of the great harbors of the Eastern Mediterranean. I found myself with a few people in a room, when a person entered who, for the sake of comparison, resembled St. Peter very closely. "Ask him about the mule of the Pope," said one of these gentlemen. "It is I," resumed another, "who would very much like to be the mule of the Pope! Well nourished, well lodged, with nothing to do besides leaving itself to be embraced by pilgrims and pretty pilgrimesses, it's a great job!" Now these gentlemen were Christians, and moreover, Catholics. The language which they employed in common was French. I had all the difficulty in the world to convince them that the mule in question was a shoe and not a quadruped.*

¹⁴⁵The Báb attests that Muhammad began His mission in 612 CE (i.e., 1270 years before His own began

in 1844 CE, and 1260 years after the hijra), and that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Amir al-Mu'minin to the Shi'a became the first believer in 619 CE, seven years later.

¹⁴⁶The Báb refers to the Qur'án LXI:6: And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, "This is evident sorcery!"

¹⁴⁷Witnesses in this case denotes martyrs. The Arabic word "shahid" has both meanings.

¹⁴⁸The Báb makes repeated reference to there being only seventy conversions by Christians to Islam. Whether He means to say only seventy conversions during the lifetime of Muhammad or during the entirety of the Islamic Dispensation is not entirely clear. If the former, the source for this figure has not been located. If the latter, He would appear to be citing either a traditional number known to the intended reader of Dala'il-i-sab'ih or a symbolic number which the translator has not been able to decipher. Historically speaking there have been hundreds of thousands, if not millions of conversions to Islam by Christians.

¹⁴⁹Shoghi Effendi cites this passage in "The Promised Day is Come" (pp. 18-19):

"The Báb, moreover, in that same treatise, censuring the failure of the Christian divines to acknowledge the truth of Muhammad's mission, makes this illuminating statement: "The blame falleth upon their doctors, for if these had believed, they would have been followed by the mass of their countrymen. Behold then, that which hath come to pass! The learned men of Christendom are held to be learned by virtue of their safeguarding the teaching of Christ, and yet consider how they themselves have been the cause of men's failure to accept the Faith and attain unto salvation!"

¹⁵⁰Nicolas footnote: *Christian doctrine is but a preparation for Muslim doctrine. Also, if on the one hand the Christian doctors were right to safeguard the doctrine of Christ, they were mistaken, on the other hand, not to understand that it had as its crown Muhammad. When this One appeared, they did not believe in Him, thus precipitating themselves into perdition. May this example serve to instruct you.*

¹⁵¹Nicolas footnote: *Be a Bábí.*

¹⁵²Nicolas footnote: *Knowledge does not drive its glory from the one who possesses it; on the contrary, it honors him.*

¹⁵³In Arabic, "apostle" is rasúl. In this case this refers to rasúl alláh, the prophet Muhammad.

¹⁵⁴Nicolas footnote: *We know that the Báb counts 1270 years between the mission of Muhammad and His own. He takes in effect as the point of departure not the hijra but the first proclamation of the Arab Prophet. Now He said above that in round numbers five hundred years elapsed between Jesus and*

Muhammad. From that we come to the number 1770 here cited.

¹⁵⁵Here the Báb seems to be referring to the capital penalty which is exacted from those who convert from Islam to any other religion, including Christianity. Whilst Jews and Christians (and in certain domains, Zoroastrians, Buddhists and Hindus) were regarded as People of the Book and protected, according to the provision of the Qur'án, and not generally persecuted, Muslims who converted to Judaism or Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism or Hinduism were subject to capital punishment. Nonetheless, there are historical records attesting to conversions of Muslims to Christianity, particularly under the aegis of Christian governments, such as in Syria and Palestine during the Crusades.

¹⁵⁶The "hidden Mahdi" is the twelfth Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi, Sahibu'l-Asr, al-Hujjat, al-Qa'im, born 15th of Shaban 255 A.H., at Samarra in 'Iraq, from Imam Hasan-al-Askari, and Nargis Khatún. Disappeared 260 A.H., and is believed by Ithna 'Ashari Shi'i Muslims to be alive and in "occultation".

¹⁵⁷Islamic hadith.

¹⁵⁸Qur'án III:55; alluded to in Qur'án VI:60, XIII:36.

¹⁵⁹Nicolas footnote: *In the person of one of His descendants.*

¹⁶⁰On 23 May 1844 the Báb declared His mission to His first disciple, Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i. He turned twenty-five years of age on 20 October 1844, almost five months later.

¹⁶¹Qur'án III:7.

¹⁶²"This message was given to the Prophet (saas) in pieces over a period spanning approximately 23 years (610 CE to 622 CE). The Prophet (saas) was 40 years old when the Qur'án began to be revealed to him, and he was 63 when the revelation was completed." [<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/>]

¹⁶³The Qur'án contains 6346 verses, which is 19 X 334. I mention this factor because of the prominence of the number 19 in the Writings of the Báb.

¹⁶⁴Here the Báb asks if any of His predecessors, the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, including the twelve Imams, have shown the capacity to reveal verses at the rate that the Báb has demonstrated. The reader knows of course that there is no historical record or even claim that anyone, including any of the Imams has revealed any verses, let alone that they have revealed verses at the prodigious rate claimed by the Báb.

¹⁶⁵Book attributed to the Imam Ja'afar al-Sadiq.

¹⁶⁶Imam Ja'afar al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam. There are many websites that give detailed information about this Imam, including these:

<http://www.al-islam.org/kaaba14/9.htm>

http://hozeh.tebyan.net/Html/library/subject3/book_104_1.htm

<http://www.almujtaba.com/article/html/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=index&catid=&topic=26>

¹⁶⁷Islamic tradition.

¹⁶⁸The Báb claims that nobody in Islamic history has demonstrated this capacity to reveal thousands of verses in six hours. Future historians will have to determine if this claim is sustainable.

¹⁶⁹Khutbih, means sermon.

¹⁷⁰See: Baha'u'llah, *Kitab-i-Iqan*, pp. 222-223; 'Abdu'l-Baha, *A Traveler's Narrative*, p. 15.

¹⁷¹Nicolas footnote: *The sciences were created in order to arrive at comprehension of the [divine] verses, and for nothing else — those who acquire them with the aim of profiting [from them] in this lower world, acquire them with a false purpose. Those who are learned and do not understand the verses, are learned because of error. They know no more about how to use science than a savage knows how to use a ruler and compass.*

¹⁷²Islamic hadith.

¹⁷³At the time that the Báb wrote this verse, circa 1848, the Shah of Iran and the aristocracy and wealthy of that land had astrologers in their service, as did the Emperor of China, and the leaders of many other societies. Nor was it the case that only the privileged were guided by astrology during this time. Research has discovered the enormous popularity of astrological almanacs in 19th century Britain:

"In the early part of the 19th century, the most popular almanac in Britain was the *Vox Stellarum*, which by 1839 was selling over half a million copies - rather surprising, perhaps, when one considers that it was editorially very much on the side of the Americans in the War of Independence, believing that the result 'paved the way for freedom', and positively welcomed the French Revolution with its 'glorious and happy spirit of liberty'. It did, however, take England's part in the war against France.

"Enormous sales of almanacs, especially the cheaper ones, continued through the 19th century; in 1897 over a million copies of *Old Moore's Penny Almanac* were printed, and every one sold within two months of the end of the year (the predictions were, of course, for 1898). It was complained, halfway through the reign of Queen Victoria, that practically no one among the 'lower classes' did not possess an almanac, and most lived their lives by it, refusing to cut their grass if rain was predicted, declining to dose their cattle if the day was inauspicious." (http://www.meta-religion.com/Esoterism/Astrology/towards_the_dark.htm)

¹⁷⁴The Imam Mahdi.

¹⁷⁵In French, as in Arabic, words are either masculine or feminine. In order to preserve the feminine form

employed by the Báb in denoting "the first radiation of creation and the Mirror of God".

¹⁷⁶As the Báb explains elsewhere, and as George Townshend explains in his Introduction to "The Dawn-breakers" (p. xxx-xxxix), "When, at the beginning of His mission, the Báb, continuing the tradition of the shi'ahs, proclaimed His function under the double title of, first, the Qa'im, and second, the Gate, or Báb, some of the Muhammadans misunderstood the latter reference. They imagined His meaning to be that He was a fifth Gate in succession to Abu'l-Hasan-'Ali. His true meaning, however, as He Himself clearly announced, was very different. He was the Qa'im; but the Qa'im, though a High Prophet, stood in relation to a succeeding and greater Manifestation as did John the Baptist to the Christ. He was the Forerunner of One yet more mighty than Himself. He was to decrease; that Mighty One was to increase. And as John the Baptist had been the Herald or Gate of the Christ, so was the Báb the Herald or Gate of Baha'u'llah." According to Professor E. G. Browne, after the disappearance of the twelfth Imam, in 260 A.H., for a period of 69 years (until 329 A.H.), a succession of persons "known as 'Gates' (Abváb)" served as intermediaries between the "hidden Imam" and his followers. "The first of them was Abu-'Umar-'Uthman ibn-i-Sa'id Umari; the second Abu-Ja'far Muhammad-ibn-i-'Uthman, son of the above; the third Husayn-ibn-i-Ruh Naw-bakhti; the fourth Abu'l-Hasan Ali-ibn-i-Muhammad Simari. Of these 'Gates' the first was appointed by the Imam Hasan-i-'Askari, the others by the then acting 'Gate' with the sanction and approval of the Imam Mihdi. This period—extending over 69 years—during which the Imam was still accessible by means of the 'Gates,' is known as the 'Lesser' or 'Minor Occultation' (Ghaybat-i-Sughra). This was succeeded by the 'Greater' or 'Major Occultation' (Ghaybat-i-Kubra). When Abu'l-Hasan Ali, the last of the 'Gates,' drew near to his latter end, he was urged by the faithful (who contemplated with despair the prospect of complete severance from the Imam) to nominate a successor. This, however, he refused to do, saying, 'God hath a purpose which He will accomplish.' So on his death all liv communication between the Imam and his Church ceased, and the 'Major Occultation' began and shall continue until the Return of the Imam take place in the fullness of time." (Excerpt from "A Traveller's Narrative," Note O, pp. 296-99; cited Introduction, "The Dawn-breakers," pp. liii-liv). This information is confirmed, without including all of these details, in [<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-ithna-ashari.htm>].

¹⁷⁷Qayyumu'l-Asma', also called Tafsir Surat Yusuf, Ahsanu'l-Qisas.

¹⁷⁸Nicolas footnote: *The mujtahidun, for whom the door of knowledge is closed, who, by deduction [from authoritative texts] which are more and less equitable, rule over the conduct of men [believers].*

¹⁷⁹Shari'ah, the canonical law of Islam, based entirely upon the text of the Qur'án and of the hadith.

¹⁸⁰Nicolas footnote: *The Báb.*

¹⁸¹Nicolas footnote: *The 'little' last judgment. The day of the appearance of the Imam Mahdi, [when] all those who recognize him will be saved from hell, [and] all those who reject him will be condemned.*

¹⁸²Nicolas footnote: *The Báb here alludes to the injuries to which He was subjected, to the torments to which he submitted.*

¹⁸³Nicolas footnote: *Is this Mirza Jani?* Nicolas refers to Haji Mirza Jani Kashani as perhaps the historian of the Bábí movement alluded to in this passage by the Báb. Haji Mirza Jani Kashani, "surnamed Par-Pa...was a merchant of note" (DB, p. 101). "According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghiti" (pp. 42-5), Haji Mirza Jani was known by the people of Kashan as Haji Mirza Janiy-i-Buzurg in order to distinguish him from his namesake, who was also a merchant of Kashan, known by the name of Haji Mirza Janiy-i-Turk, or Kuchiq. The former had three brothers the eldest was named Haji Muhammad-Isma'il-i-Dhabih, the second Haji Mirza Ahmad, the third Haji Ali-Akbar." (footnote written by Shoghi Effendi to DB, p. 101) He is spoken of in connection with the Bábí Faith in Nabil's Narrative (DB, pp. 8, 101, 217-221, 436, 522, 637), and Shoghi Effendi quotes Haji Mirza Jani Kashani's history in a number of his footnotes to "The Dawn-breakers". In so doing, he cites Appendix Two to Mirza Husayn-i-Hamadani's *Tarikh-i-Jadid*, translated, edited and annotated by Professor E.G. Browne. Appendix Two was identified by Browne and treated by Shoghi Effendi as "Haji Mirza Jani's history" (footnote 5, DB, p. 77; footnote 1, DB, p. 179; footnote 1, DB, p. 518). Shoghi Effendi also cited Haji Mirza Jani Kashani's words from the *Tarikh-i-Jadid* itself (footnote 1, DB, p. 236; footnote 4, DB, p. 383; footnote 2, DB, p. 413). *Tarikh-i-Jadid* was published by Cambridge University Press in 1893, and in all Shoghi Effendi cited this historical source about thirty times in his footnotes to "The Dawn-breakers". Another history of the Bábí period which is alleged to have been authored in its entirety by Haji Mirza Kashani is entitled "*Kitab al-Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*". A.L.M. Nicolas, the most prolific French writer on the Bábí movement, authored an article about "*Kitab al-Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*" in 1903 ("A propos de deux manuscrits "Bábís" de la Bibliotheque Nationale," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, Vol. 47, Paris 1903, pp. 58-73). This was the first European reference to "*Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*". In 1910 the "*Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*" was published by E.J. Brill (Leiden) and Luzac & Co. (London), edited in the Persian original with annotations and appendices in English compiled and authored by Professor E. G. Browne. While 'Abdu'l-Baha had the highest esteem for Professor Browne (PUP, p. 398), and his translation of the "*Lawh-i-Sultan*" of Baha'u'llah was mentioned both by 'Abdu'l-Baha (Ibid.) and by the recent translators of that text (Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 241), and while Shoghi Effendi cited Professor Browne's translations of "A Traveler's Narrative" (by 'Abdu'l-Baha; cited in "The Dawn-breakers," pp. 2, 214), and "*Tarikh-i-Jadid*" (by Husayn-i-Hamadani), Shoghi Effendi does not refer to "*Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*" either in his footnotes to "The Dawn-breakers", or in his bibliography to Nabil's Narrative. When we consider that "The Dawn-breakers" was first published in 1932, it should be clear to every fair-minded reader that his decision to exclude "*Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*" from among his historical sources was deliberate and purposeful. However, Shoghi Effendi does not seem to have authored a single letter in explanation of this decision. In 1970, Hand of the Cause of God Hasan Muhammad Balyuzi's "Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith" (London, 1970) pointed out various features of "*Kitab al-Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*" which indicate that it was not authored by Haji Mirza Jani Kashani. He suggested that it may have been authored by Mirza Ahmad, a brother of Haji Mirza Jani Kashani and a follower of Mirza Yahya. This was the first mention of "*Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*" by a Bahá'í author in English. Browne quoted from and referred to this work in his appendices to ATN and *Tarikh-i-Jadid*, and readers of Bahá'í histories in Persian and Arabic would have been familiar with references to "*Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*" by 'Abdu'l-Baha and Abu'l-Fadl-i-Gulpaygani. Balyuzi's book was the first systematic analysis of the work by a Bahá'í scholar that had been published up to that time. Since then controversy has raged among the historians of the Bábí movement regarding the accuracy and objectivity of "*Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*", and whether it is correct to attribute

this work to Haji Mirza Jani Kashani, in which some have sided with Professor Browne and others with 'Abdu'l-Baha, Abu'l-Fadl and Balyuzi. In a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice we find the following reference to the volume in question: "The Nuqtatu'l-Kaf—Arabic for "The Point of Kaf" (the letter K)—is a short chronicle of events of the Bábí Faith originally written by Haji Mirza Jani, a merchant from Kashan who was martyred in 1852. Mr Balyuzi explains that it was later tampered with and was denounced as a forgery by Mirza Abu'l-Fadl, the pre-eminent Bahá'í scholar of the East during the Faith's Heroic Age. The Nuqtatu'l-Kaf presents a distorted history of the Bábí Faith and its doctrines. See Edward Granville Browne, pp. 62-88.] (The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986, p. 448)

¹⁸⁴Qur'án XVII:45.

¹⁸⁵Nicolas footnote: *The Báb*.

¹⁸⁶Here the Báb seems to be identifying the divine attribute of Oneness (tawhid), and indicating that the Manifestation of God transcends this attribute, i.e., that the reality of the Manifestation of God transcends the believer's understanding of the Oneness of God..

¹⁸⁷Here the Báb seems to be identifying the divine attribute of Eternity (azal), and indicating that the Manifestation of God transcends this attribute, i.e., that the reality of the Manifestation of God transcends the believer's understanding of the Eternity of God.

¹⁸⁸The purpose of our existence is articulated by Baha'u'llah in many passages of His Writings:

"The beginning of all things is the knowledge of God, and the end of all things is strict observance of whatsoever hath been sent down from the empyrean of the Divine Will that pervadeth all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth." (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 5)

"Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein, He, through the direct operation of His unconstrained and sovereign Will, chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him—a capacity that must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation...." (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 65)

"The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence." (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 70)

"The first and foremost duty prescribed unto men, next to the recognition of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, is the duty of steadfastness in His Cause." (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 290)

"That which beseemeth you is the love of God, and the love of Him Who is the Manifestation of His Essence, and the observance of whatsoever He chooseth to prescribe unto you, did ye but

know it." (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, pp. 304-305)

"Thou didst bring mankind into being to know Thee and to serve Thy Cause..." (Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 111)

"We have brought thee into being to serve Me, to glorify My Word and to proclaim My Cause." (Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 246)

"I testify that Thou hast created me, and nourished me, and brought me up, and fed me, and sustained me, that I may recognize Him Who is the Day-Spring of Thy signs, and the Revealer of Thy clear tokens." (Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, p. 228)

"I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee." (Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, p. 313)

"I testify, O my God, and my King, that Thou hast created me to remember Thee, to glorify Thee, and to aid Thy Cause." (Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 3)

"I testify that Thou hast created Thy servants to aid Thy Cause and exalt Thy Word..." (Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 37)

"Thou hast created us and revealed us for Thy glorification and praise." (Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 127)

¹⁸⁹Qur'án XIII:2

¹⁹⁰Nicolas footnote: *As we have seen, this means to pertain to the contemplation and acceptance of the subsequent Prophet, Who, in this case, is the Báb.*

¹⁹¹The Báb indicates that the contemplation of God is only possible through the contemplation of the Manifestation of God, and that His presence is, at that moment of the revelation of this book, in Mah-Ku. The throne of God is hence upon this mountain and seated there is the Báb.

¹⁹²Nicolas footnote: *Here we enter into the second part of the work, in which the Báb relies upon the hadith, the miracles, talismanic science, etc. to demonstrate [the truth of] His mission.*

¹⁹³The first Imam, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, and the first male believer in His prophethood.

¹⁹⁴Nicolas footnote: *My text here is faulty. I have not identified this khutbih. It probably refers to the Khutbih-i-Tutunjiyyih. The Khutbih-i-Tutunjiyyih, a famous sermon of the Imam 'Ali has been translated*

with a commentary by Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir, and is available on the Internet (<http://bahai-library.com/provisionals/tutunjiyyih.html>).

If the true title of this sermon is Khutbih-i-Tamimiyyih, it most likely refers to the Banu Tamim, described in wikipedia: "The Bani Tamīm are located primarily in Najd (Central Saudi Arabia), central and southern 'Iraq (Basra and Diyala) and the Iranian province of Khuzestan and in south and north of Yemen [Hadramot, and Taiz city]. Members of this tribe are commonly identifiable by the surnames of "Al-Tamimi" or "al-Tamīmī", which can be spelled as "Al-Timimi" or "Al-Temimi" in reflection of the local accent.

"The tribe's progenitor Tamīm or Taym ibn Murrah ibn Ka'ab is said to have lived in the 1st century CE and is reported to have met one of Jesus Christ's disciples. Kilab, who is Taym's brother, is an ancestor of Prophet Muhammad. Notable persons from Banu Taym were Abu Bakr and Talha ibn Ubayd-Allah. Through their ancestor Tamīm, the tribe traces its lineage to Adnan and the prophets Ishmael and Abraham.

"Banu Taym or Banu Tamim converted to Islam in the eighth year after the Hijra. In an Islamic hadith, Prophet Muhammad remarked that the Tamīm tribe would be the most vigorous of his community in fighting the Dajjal (the Antichrist), an evil figure in Islamic eschatology."

¹⁹⁵Nicolas footnote: *Because they were created for Him.*

¹⁹⁶Nicolas footnote: *We cannot know His essence through material objects.*

¹⁹⁷Nicolas footnote: *The third son of Muhammad.* This is erroneous. According to <http://al-islam.org/search/index.html>, the Imam 'Ali ibn Husayn, Zaynu'l-'Abidin, was known as the Imam Sajjad. He was the only son of the Imam Husayn to survive the massacre of his family in Karbila. He was imprisoned, then sent to Medina, then imprisoned again, and once more returned to Medina. He then retired completely from public life and devoted himself to writing. Among the works of the Imam Sajjad is "Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya", known as "The Psalm of the Household of the Prophet", containing fifty-seven prayers. According to Shi'i tradition, the Imam Sajjad was poisoned by Walid ibn 'Abdu'l-Malik by order of the Umayyad caliph Hisham in 95/172, after having completed thirty-five years as Imam.

¹⁹⁸This is apparently one of the fifty-seven prayers contained in "Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya".

¹⁹⁹Nicolas footnote: *Period during which the Imam al-Zaman remains hidden from the eyes of humans.* The "occultation" of the Imam Mahdi, comprising both the "lesser occultation" (qaibet-i-saghir) during which the Abvab mediated between the twelfth Imam and his followers, and the "greater occultation" (qaibet-i-kabir), from the end of that mediation until the reappearance of the twelfth Imam.

²⁰⁰Nicolas footnote: *The joy of seeing the Imam al-Zaman reappear. In this instance, the Báb.*

²⁰¹The Báb seems to be referring to the seven sovereigns reigning in regions with Ithna 'Ashari populations. Shoghi Effendi cited this passage in "The Promised Day is Come" (p. 18):

“Gracious God!” writes the Báb in the Dala’il-i-Sab’ih (Seven Proofs) with reference to the “seven powerful sovereigns ruling the world” in His day, “None of them hath been informed of His [the Báb’s] Manifestation, and if informed, none hath believed in Him. Who knoweth, they may leave this world below full of desire, and without having realized that the thing for which they were waiting had come to pass. This is what happened to the monarchs that held fast unto the Gospel. They awaited the coming of the Prophet of God [Muhammad], and when He did appear, they failed to recognize Him. Behold how great are the sums which these sovereigns expend without even the slightest thought of appointing an official charged with the task of acquainting them in their own realms with the Manifestation of God! They would thereby have fulfilled the purpose for which they have been created. All their desires have been and are still fixed upon leaving behind them traces of their names.”

²⁰²Nicolas footnote: *For thus they would believe in the new Prophet and in Him they would see God, the contemplation of Whom is the final cause of their existence upon this earth.*

²⁰³Nicolas footnote: *It is so today, and it is because of this that the Báb appeared. The hadith says that the earth will be full of justice and equity, even as it had been full of violence and iniquities. This is taken literally by those Muslims who claim that in the Day in which the Witness of God will make His appearance, He will reign over all the world and will melt all the religions into one. 'You forget,' retorts the Báb, 'that all the Prophets without exception were treated with derision and often martyred. It will be the same for this Witness, for it is I Who am Him, and God knows in what outrages I have been immersed.'*

²⁰⁴Unidentified hadith.

²⁰⁵Ibn ‘Abbas was one of the companions of Muhammad, and he is described online: http://www.anwary-islam.com/companion/s_abdullah-ibn-abbas.htm

²⁰⁶No information was found about this book prior to publication.

²⁰⁷Unidentified hadith.

²⁰⁸Unidentified hadith.

²⁰⁹Nicolas footnote: *Between what you have heard of Muhammad and what you have seen of Me?*

²¹⁰He is not a believer if he does not act differently on the Day of the appearance of the Manifestation from the period in which the Manifestation was hidden.

²¹¹Nicolas footnote: *The Muslim believes in the Imam Mahdi, and when He appears, he no longer believes in Him. Is that acting sanely?* He continues, explicating the Báb's meaning by paraphrasing it: *You and the others, you have seen nothing of Muhammad. You have believed in what has been told to you — these traditions have sufficed for you to declare your belief. Today you see with your own eyes and you do not believe? Then you are not Muslims. A Muslim must believe in the Manifestation before it occurs and accept it when it occurs.*

²¹²Nicolas footnote: *By stopping at the exterior sense. And not seeking for the inner meaning.*

²¹³Nicolas footnote: *Evidently. Up until then, it was a believer walking in the way of God. At the [appearance of the] new Manifestation of Divinity, he mistakes his way and takes that of "negation". He was a believer; he becomes an infidel.*

²¹⁴The Báb uses this expression to refer to the Manifestations of God.

²¹⁵Nicolas footnote: *The Shi'i call the family of the Prophet not just His daughter and son-in-law, but their descendants, which is to say the Imams. 'But,' the Báb says, 'if the ahadith coming from the mouth of the Prophet promise the advent of the Imam Mahdi, the Imams, their successors [the successors of Muhammad as interpreters of the ahadith] have taken care to insist upon this point in such a clear and precise fashion, that those who are not blind must confirm that the Imam Mahdi is the [same] person Who is manifest in Me.'*

²¹⁶Unidentified hadith.

²¹⁷Nicolas footnote: *These two Surahs: Surah of Rúm (XXIX); Surah of 'Ankabút (XXX). Nicolas has reversed the order of the Surah: Suratu'l-'Ankabút is XXIX and Suratu'l-Rúm is XXX. The Báb cites the text from Suratu'l-'Ankabút, and Suratu'l- Rúm elaborates upon this theme, that God puts those to claim to be believers to the test.*

²¹⁸Qur'án XXIX:1.

²¹⁹Nicolas footnote: *These two Surahs explain that all the Prophets have encountered insurmountable obstacles with regard to those whom they caused to recognize their mission, and who clashed [and opposed them] with mocking and incredulity. Thus if the reader awakens as he reads the grievances of Muhammad, he will perhaps reflect upon his own case and tell himself, 'Even as the Arabs rejected Muhammad, in my turn I am rejecting a person who calls himself a Prophet.' This reflection would impell him to honestly examine the question, and from that point on he will be a convert to Bábism.*

²²⁰Unidentified hadith.

²²¹This has been explained in a previous footnote.

²²²The Imam Husayn is the third of Shi'i Imams, after 'Ali bin Abi Talib and Hasan ibn 'Ali.

²²³The Báb counts 2270 years from Moses to the time of his own declaration. Since he gives 1270 years as the interval from Muhammad to himself, then it is clear that he places Moses 1000 years prior to Muhammad, or around 400 BCE.

²²⁴Exodus 4:2-4,17,20; 7:15-17,19-20; 8:5,16-17; 9:23; 10:13; 14:16; 17:5,9; Numbers 20:7-11; Qur'án 7:107,117; 20:17-21; 26:32,45,63; 27:10; 28:31

²²⁵Qur'án VII:113.

²²⁶Nicolas footnote: *This did not occur to the intellects of the adversaries of Moses. He should in effect have said: 'Here is a false prophet and false miracles. I am going to give the immediate and certain proof by, without hesitation, myself making verses equal to these, if not superior.'*

²²⁷Nicolas footnote: *It was not necessary that I discuss this with you, for divine justice knows what must be done for your sake. I was manifested, I brought my verses as testimony, and that suffices. It is not suitable that God [be asked to] add other proofs than these, for it is He Who commands and you who must obey.*

²²⁸Nicolas footnote: *Prayer for all the prophets and saints used on pilgrimage.*

²²⁹Persian turn of phrase of indeterminate meaning.

²³⁰Aswad means "black" in Arabic, and siyyid denotes a male descendant of the prophet Muhammad. Al-siyyid al-aswad would mean the "black siyyid". This person has not been positively identified. It seems to refer to the Imam Husayn, given the reference to quenching his thirst, as he is reported to have suffered three days of hunger and thirst prior to being martyred.

²³¹Ta'ziyih-kháníh is a drama depicting the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn and the tragic events associated with it. The stories recounted during a ta'ziyih (passion play) are mainly based upon a combination of folk culture and common religious beliefs. The ta'ziyih-kháníh was gradually developed and converted into a ritual of religious drama during the Qajar era in Iran (1798-1925).

²³²Refers to all the 'ulama' who are studying in Islamic institutions of higher learning.

²³³Unidentified hadith.

²³⁴Qur'án VI:25.

²³⁵Qur'án XXVII:14.

²³⁶Nicolas footnote: *These are the apostles, the companions — it is not that their existence is eternal, but that such are found in every manifestation.*

²³⁷Nicolas footnote: *We will see later the second meaning, the true one, of this expression, "holy war."*

Jihad is mentioned in many verses of the Qur'án: II:190,191,193, 216-217,244,246; III:13,111,156,167; IV:74-77,84,90,95; V:24,54; also in VIII, IX, XVI, XXII, XXXIII, XLVII, XLVIII, XLIX, LIX, LX, LXI, LXXIII. It is also referred to in the Bayán.

²³⁸Nicolas footnote: *The Báb is speaking to a Muslim and here employs the arguments of Islam.*

²³⁹Earlier in the text (see footnote 154) the Báb notes that 2270 years are the interval between Moses and Himself, and here He apparently indicates that 2270 years is the interval between David and Himself.

²⁴⁰Nicolas footnote: *The proofs and arguments are worth nothing to a spirit who is forewarned, for if the arguments of Islam had the unquestioned value that you believe them to have, then they would have sufficed to convert the Jews and the Christians.*

²⁴¹Speaking of Him Whom God shall make manifest, the Báb, as quoted by Baha'u'llah in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" (p. 155):

And likewise, He saith: "In the day of the revelation of Him Whom God shall make manifest all that dwell on earth will be equal in His estimation. Whomsoever He ordaineth as a Prophet, he, verily, hath been a Prophet from the beginning that hath no beginning, and will thus remain until the end that hath no end, inasmuch as this is an act of God. And whosoever is made a Vicegerent by Him, shall be a Vice-gerent in all the worlds, for this is an act of God. For the will of God can in no wise be revealed except through His will, nor His wish be manifested save through His wish. He, verily, is the All-Conquering, the All-Powerful, the All-Highest."

²⁴²Hujjat Kubra is the most great proof, meaning the Word of God.

²⁴³Nicolas footnote: *Supreme argument.*

²⁴⁴Nicolas footnote: *This is the day of the little last judgment. There are, in effect, two last judgments, and this is why. Islam being the religion of God, it was not admissable that it not reign upon all the earth. However, the facts are otherwise, and they must be explained. It is, according to the Muslims, extremely simple. Muhammad placed His own family at the same rank as the Qur'án. This family must therefore in reality possess in itself complete and absolute knowledge. This is what happened with 'Ali and the twelve Imams. But the last of these twelve disappeared and since then the door of knowledge has been closed and the Muslim (Shi'i) religion is no longer propagated among mankind. The divine knowledge having not been completely unveiled to the eyes of men, there is nothing extraordinary in that a part of the world should have remained unbelieving. Alone, the elected of God, His well-beloved people, those upon whom He bestowed His grace, have become Muslims.*

But the hidden Imam must reappear — it is He who will unveil the last mysteries. He is, in this sense, the Hujjat or testimony of God. The light which He will spread will be so blinding that only those whose hearts are hardened by the devil will not see Him. The Mahdi must come from Makka with sword in hand

and conquer the entire globe. Men thus pressed from one side by evidence and from the other by violence, will surely recognize and accept the Muslim religion. Those who would not do so would be immediately precipitated into hell. There would thus be a singular and definitive separation between the faithful and the infidels. The surface of the globe would no longer be inhabited except by Muslims. It is for them that the Day of the Last Judgment will shine forth, in which each one will receive the recompense or the chastisement that he merits. The infidel would have nothing [good] to see in this [day], for after the appearance of the Imam [Mahdi] they would be definitively condemned. Furthermore, none of them would remain upon the surface of the globe. What I give here is the Shi'i theory. In a later study of the Bayán, we will see what one must truly understand by the Last Judgment.

²⁴⁵Nicolas footnote: *Can you distinguish in this lower world those who are destined for paradise from those who are called by hell? You would wish to deny My mission by demonstrating that I am not a powerful man in the sense which men attach to this word; but do you then see that the people of God (Persia) is more powerful than other nations? On the contrary, the Europeans are richer and more civilized, and seem to be favored by God. But doesn't the Qur'án explain what is behind this apparent contradiction?*

²⁴⁶The Master of this Manifestation is the Báb's expression here for the Manifestation of God.

²⁴⁷Through a word of the mouth of the Manifestation the believers are created and they are the ones who create ahadith. It is according to the Will of God that the Manifestation should create the believers and the believers create the ahadith. The implication is that the word of the Manifestation is always superior in weight and value to the word of any believer.

²⁴⁸Baha'u'llah writes in Kitab-i-Iqan (p. 211): "The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit." In the Persian Hidden Words (#69) He writes: "Holy words and pure and goodly deeds ascend unto the heaven of celestial glory. Strive that your deeds may be cleansed from the dust of self and hypocrisy and find favor at the court of glory; for ere long the assayers of mankind shall, in the holy presence of the Adored One, accept naught but absolute virtue and deeds of stainless purity." In the Arabic Hidden Words (#1) He writes: "My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting." In another Tablet (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 71) He writes: "His purpose, however, is to enable the pure in spirit and the detached in heart to ascend, by virtue of their own innate powers, unto the shores of the Most Great Ocean, that thereby they who seek the Beauty of the All-Glorious may be distinguished and separated from the wayward and perverse." In another Tablet (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 287) He writes: "Be pure, O people of God, be pure; be righteous, be righteous.... Say: O people of God! That which can ensure the victory of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, His hosts and helpers on earth, have been set down in the sacred Books and Scriptures, and are as clear and manifest as the sun. These hosts are such righteous deeds, such conduct and character, as are acceptable in His sight. Whoso ariseth, in this Day, to aid Our Cause, and summoneth to his assistance the hosts of a praiseworthy character and upright conduct, the influence flowing from such an action will,

most certainly, be diffused throughout the whole world." He likewise warns, in *Gems of Divine Mystery* (p. 57): "Yea, inasmuch as these people have failed to acquire true knowledge from its source and wellspring, and from the ocean of fresh and soft-flowing waters that stream, by the leave of God, through hearts that are pure and stainless, they have been veiled from that which God hath intended by those words and allusions and have remained confined within the prison of their own selves."

²⁴⁹Quotes Surat al-A'raf, 7:172.

²⁵⁰Nicolas footnote: *Adam going to Makka one day, saw his chest open and the millions of men who are his descendants coming out. God appeared then and asked them, "Am I not your Lord"" "Yes," answered some, whilst others kept their silence. These latter ones, are they deserving of the blessings of God? Certainly not. And thus, even as one must answer affirmatively all the questions of God, even so one must accept and believe everything I say, for I am God. Hence, if I announce to you that I am able create one hundred 'Alis ['Ali ibn Abu Talib, first Imam], you must believe me. If you do not believe me, are you worthy of the blessing of this [new] creation? Certainly not. What need have I then to create them? If you had believed me, you would have seen them.*

²⁵¹Nicolas footnote: *The Christian who, in the epoch of Muhammad, converted to Islam was the object of scandal for those whom he left behind. It is because these latter ones did not understand the teaching of the Christ. Alone, the new convert, by his conversion, demonstrated that he understood this teaching, the final cause of which was to prepare the believers to accept Muhammad. The Muslim who converts today to Bábism, is exactly in the same situation — he is a renegade in the eyes of his co-religionists, saintly and pure in the eyes of God.*

²⁵²Nicolas footnote: *They would be good, excellent Bábís, but when Him Whom God shall manifest will appear, they will hesitate to recognize Him.*

²⁵³'Ilm-i-tawhid ('ilm al-tawhid in Arabic), also called 'ilm al-kalam, usual al-din, 'ilm al-usul, is the knowledge of first principles of the Islamic religion, corresponding to Christian theology.

²⁵⁴The Báb indicates that the true 'ilm-i-tawhid is not what the Muslim scholars have supposed, not based on their study and reasoning, but rather that this is an esoteric science which is known only to those who are divinely inspired.

²⁵⁵Nicolas footnote: *Title of one of the works of the Báb. Haykal means "form, figure" but here signifies "square, star", and is magical. See the following note. MacEoin reported in "The Sources for Early Bábí Doctrine and History" (Leiden, 1992, p. 90) that the book here called "Kitab-i-hayakil-i-vahid" (Ibid., note 59 cites Dala'il-i-sab'ih, pp. 45-46), is what has been called "Lawh-i-hurufat" by Nabil Zarandi (The Dawn-breakers, p. 304; cited Ibid., footnote 53, p. 88), and "Kitab-i-dar hayakil-i-vahid" by Baha'u'llah (Ibid., footnote 55, p. 89), and "Kitab-i-hayakil" by Baha'u'llah (Ibid., footnote 56, p. 89). MacEoin has identified a number of hayakil, works written in the form of a pentacle, in his "Sources" (pp. 90,186), including a collection in the International Bahá'í Archives in Haifa, and compilations in the British*

Library and the Cambridge University Library. He does not give a location for "Kitab-i-hayakil-i-vahid".

²⁵⁶The Haykal (pentagram) of Himness, that is, of God Himself.

²⁵⁷Nicolas footnote: *There exist one thousand Names of God. But one of these Names is greater than all the others, and the one who would know it could do anything in this world — the elementary spirits would submit to him. This has been discussed until now by those who have lost their sight, and two principal camps have formed, of which one claims that the Name Allah is the sought after symbol, while the other claims having found it in the word Huwa (He). These latter ones base themselves on the fact that even as they breathe, human beings and animals, at the moment of exhalation or inspiration, cause this syllable to be vocalized. However, the creature being the work of God, what is extraordinary in the whole creation at event instant invoking the Name of its Creator? The murmur of the water, the rustling of the leaves, the trembling of the wind resemble, if we pay attention, this syllable Huwa, more or less prolonged. And this universally repeated Name can not but be the most great Name of God [according to some]. This is why the Sufis, the mystics, the dervishes, the philosophers repeat at every instant "Huwa".*

If we wish to understand something of this world, we can only do it with the aid of this divine key. Here intervenes the science of talismans. Following the calculations of abjad, the word Huwa represents the number 11. If one causes this number to travel, as the Persians say, through the words Nurani (from light, Zulmani (of shadows), and Atashi (of fire), one obtains other numbers which serve to fill in the magical square. One must cause this number to travel through the numbers representing the thought upon which one is allighted, the desire which we have, the aim that we search after and in this way we will arrive at the solution of the problem. We know the affection which the Báb has for the number 19. He derives it from the sacred number 360. This is how He obtains it — 360 is divisible by 20, for the dividend is 360, the divider 20, the quotient 18 and remainder zero. These numbers have no relation one to the other. He divides it thus by 10 and obtains 360 as dividend, 19 as divider, 19 as quotient. But it is found that the division is inexact, in the sum of a unity [1] which exceeds it. This unity is precisely the divine Unity. He furthermore relates this number 19 to the number 11, that is to say Huwa through an operation into which it would be useless to enter.

²⁵⁸Nicolas footnote: *This khutbih refers according to Muslims to the end of the world, and according to the Bábís, to the end of the Islamic time [Dispensation]. As we see, after having proven his mission by basing himself upon the Qur'án, the Báb now demonstrates it relying upon the ahadith.*

²⁵⁹This phrase is found in various Tablets of the Báb and Baha'u'llah, in the case of the former, in the opening passage of "Bayán al-'arabiyya".

²⁶⁰Quote from the "Khutba al-Tutunjiyyah", traditionally attributed to the Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib, and translated from the Arabic into English by Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir, this "Sermon of the Gulf" is e-published at: http://bahai-library.com/?file=imamali_khutbih_tutunjiyyih.html

²⁶¹Another citation from the "Khutba al-Tutunjiyyah".

²⁶²Nicolas footnote: *Batil also means "illusory, lying" and it is in this sense that the Shi'i orthodox understand this hadith. But everything we know of Bábism gives us the strict duty of choosing the signification of this word as "abrogated". But what is there that is abrogated today and which is the end of Islam? The Qur'an. And the mulla, the mujtahid, the 'ulama admit the people to the Qur'an.*

²⁶³Unidentified sermon.

²⁶⁴Unidentified sermon.

²⁶⁵From a poem attributed to the Imam 'Ali.

²⁶⁶Nicolas footnote: *Among the Turks.*

²⁶⁷Nicolas footnote: *The Turks conquered Persia, and the dynastic that reigns presently [1902], that of the Qajars [1798-1925], is a Turkish dynasty. The Bábí commentators explain this hadith by applying it either to Muhammad Shah, saying that he was incapable of reigning, that not a single opinion of his was put into force, and that he left everything to be done by his prime minister, Haji Mirza Aqasi; or to Nasiri'd-Din Shah, who ascended the throne as a child while the regency was confided to the Queen-Mother, the Amir Nizam being Atabeg A'azam.*

There is a prediction of Shah Ni'matu'llah which cites the precise date of the appearance of the Mahdi. But one of the manuscripts of this celebrated darvish belonged to Rid.a Quli Khan, the grandfather of the present Makhbir al-Dawlih. In the year of the appearance of the Báb, which was the year fixed by the darvish, Rid.a Quli Khan did not accept Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad as the Mahdi and wrote in his own handwriting in the margin of his book, "As in the year indicated here nothing extraordinary happened, this is probably a place where the orthography of the word should be modified, following the abjad, the number of the year in question, for it is impossible that Shah Ni'matu'llah is mistaken. One must therefore change the sin into sad, which postpones the event until twenty years later." This volume was actually found in the hands of His Excellency Nayir al-Mulk, but I could not verify the fact.

²⁶⁸Lawh-i-Fatimih, a hadith that has yet to be located in a hadith collection.

²⁶⁹This recalls the parading of the head of the Imam Husayn by his assassins.

²⁷⁰Deilem denotes a people and a region situated to the north of Mesopotamia, to the shores of the Caspian Sea, who were cited with the Turkomans, the Turks and other peoples during the reigns of certain caliphs, including al-Muntasir, al-Muti', at-Tai', al-Qadir and al-Qa'im, circa 247-447 AH (861-1055 CE).

²⁷¹Nicolas footnote: *The Bábís point out that all the predictions contained in this hadith have been realized.*

²⁷²Nicolas footnote: *That the Shi'i must say in awaiting the appearance of the Mahdi.*

²⁷³Unidentified hadith.

²⁷⁴Unidentified hadith.

²⁷⁵Nicolas footnote: *Islam derives its origin from the Arabs. The internal war referred to here is the religious conflict between the Bábís and the Muslims.*

²⁷⁶Unidentified hadith.

²⁷⁷Nicolas footnote: *He announces therein the Manifestation and explains there the meaning of the isolated letters [of the Qur'án] — He demonstrates his appearance in 1260.*

²⁷⁸Unidentified hadith.

²⁷⁹The first name of the Báb is 'Ali, from 'ala, meaning "elevated".

²⁸⁰Nicolas footnote: *The Imam Ja'afar al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam.*

²⁸¹This reference to the body of Joseph seems to indicate that the promised one would be young and beautiful.

²⁸²Al-Khidr is a famous character in Islamic tradition, described in some detail here below (<http://khidr.org/khidr.htm>):

There are numerous prophets, ‘saints’²⁸²[4] and other heroes of Islam who have exerted a great influence on aspects of Islamic history. One among them is Khidr.²⁸²[5] In Islamic folk literature, one finds a variety of names and titles associated with Khidr. Some say Khidr is a title; others have called it an epithet.²⁸²[6] He has been equated with St. George, identified as the Muslim “version of Elijah” and also referred to as the eternal wanderer.²⁸²[7] Scholars have also called and characterized him as a ‘saint’, prophet-saint, mysterious prophet-guide and so on.

The story, or the ‘legend’ as it is often called, of Khidr finds its source in the Qur’án, chapter 18 (*Sūrat Kahf*) verses 60-82,

Then they found one of Our votaries whom We had blessed and given knowledge from Us.²⁸²[8]

These verses primarily deal with an allegorical story relating Moses’ journey in search for truth. Full of symbolism, the Qur’anic story introduces the mysterious figure of Khidr, who symbolizes “the utmost depth of mystic insight accessible to man.²⁸²[9] Khidr is not mentioned in the Qur’án by name. However, the commentators have generally agreed, partly on the basis of *Hadīth* literature, that the mysterious person with whom Moses’ meeting takes place, i.e. the meeting mentioned in 18:65, and who is called in the Qur’án as “one of Our votaries”, is no other than the ‘eternal’ Khidr.²⁸²[10]

In the context of the above, a number of questions come to mind:

1. Is Khidr a name or does it represent a title?
2. Is Khidr a messenger and/or a prophet, or simply a *Wali*? and
3. Is he one of the 'eternal'?

These questions have engaged the minds of many Qur'ān commentators and scholars of Islam. The purpose of this paper is to look at the various ways in which the figure of Khidr is understood by them. The questions most pertinent to our enquiry deal with three different aspects of Khidr:

1. his identity;
2. his status; and
3. his relevance.

Khidr in History

Khidr is one of the four prophets whom the Islamic tradition recognizes as being 'alive' or 'immortal'. The other three being *Idris* (Enoch), *Ilyas* (Elias), and *'Isa* (Jesus).^{282[11]} Khidr is immortal because he drank from the water of life. There are some who have asserted, however, that this Khidr is the same person as Elijah.^{282[12]} He is also identified with St. George.^{282[13]} Amongst the earliest opinions in Western scholarship, we have Rodwell's understanding where he claims that the name "Khidr is formed from Jethro."^{282[14]}

Interestingly enough, there is a link here between Khidr and the classical Jewish legend of the 'Wandering Jew'. Krappe, in his major work on folklore, says: "...it is difficult to dissociate the figure [of the *Wandering Jew*] from that of Al-Khidr, one of the Arabic prophets. .. With the crusades Europeans became familiar with this legendary figure and out of it developed the character of Ahasuerus or Isaac Laquedem".^{282[15]}

Haim supports and even quotes Krappe to provide the link between 'the Wandering Jew legend' and the story of Khidr.^{282[16]} On the basis of some similarities of occupation, Khidr is also identified with the prophet Jeremiah or rather it is the other way around; Jeremiah is likened to Khidr.^{282[17]}

As far as the identity of Khidr in Islamic history is concerned, there are as many opinions as there are commentators.^{282[18]} Enormous detail is found pertaining to his name, genealogy, appearance, origin and status in the chronicles of Muslim commentators and historians since the beginning of Islamic scholarship.^{282[19]} Most of this literature exists either in connection with the commentary of S.18 of the Qur'ān, or it is linked with the tales of the prophets (*Qisas al-Anbiyā'*).

Historically speaking, Islam inherited the tradition of Khidr from "earlier myths and faiths."^{282[20]} Sale has argued that Muslim tradition confounds Khadir with Phineas, Elias, and St. George, saying that his soul passed by a metempsychosis successively through all three."^{282[21]}

From a critical historical perspective, the legend of Khidr is found to be linked with some of the most ancient legends known to us today—the epic of Gilgamesh, the Alexander Romance, and the Wandering Jew, just to name a few.^{282[22]} These, at the same time, are also perceived to be the three main sources of the episode of Khidr, implying, as it were, to be the ‘source’ of the whole Qur’ānic narrative of the story of Moses and Khidr; in fact, of the whole of 8.18 (*Kahf*).^{282[23]} However, a modern commentator has this to say about the historical links of Khidr,

The nearest equivalent figure in the literature of the People of the Book is Melchizedek... In Gen. xiv. 18-20, he appears as king of Salem, priest of the Most High God...^{282[24]}

However, since the advent of Islamic folk literature, Khidr has become an integral part of Islamic folklore as well as serious Sufi literature. Just as the figure of the ‘Wandering Jew’ became the main allegory of the Jewish people during their diaspora, the figure of Khidr became an allegory for the travelling sufis.

Khidr in the Qur’ān

In the Qur’ān the story begins by Moses’ declaration to his servant/companion that “I will not give up till I reach the confluence of two oceans”.^{282[25]} Moses and Joshua had begun to search for “a servant of Allah” from whom Moses was to learn the ‘secret knowledge given him by God. As seen above, Muslim tradition identifies this “servant” as Khidr.

Qur’ānic commentators have related several opinions with regard to the status of Khidr. Some say he is one of the prophets; others refer to him simply as an angel who functions as a guide to those who seek God.^{282[26]} And there are yet others who argue for his being a perfect *wali* meaning the one whom God has taken as a friend.^{282[27]}

Some commentators who have thought of Khidr as a prophet, have mainly argued on the basis of the Qur’ānic reference to him as *rahma*. What does this term, *rahma*, mean in its Qur’ānic context? As related above the Qur’ān relates in S.18:65; Khidr is one of those “...whom We had blessed...”. This characterization usually applies to the prophets. *Rahma* comes from the root RHM meaning ‘womb’. Other translations of S.18:65 include,

And there they found a devotee among Our devotees. We had blessed him with Our grace...^{282[28]}

...they found one of our servants unto whom we had granted mercy from us...^{282[29]}

Similarly in S.43:32, the Qur’ān, while expounding one of the characteristics of God’s prophets, declares them as “the ones who dispense the favour of your Lord” as against those who are seemingly “wealthy” and hold important positions (chiefs) in this world. Here the Qur’ān argues for the Prophet as

the one who embodies God's *rahma* due to God's will alone and not due to any worldly title or position which he did or did not have.

The Qur'ānic usage of *rahma* here is the same as in 8.18:65. It deals with the quality of being a *Rahīm*—the “ever-merciful”; the superlative degree of which is applied to God alone. So God being a *Rahīm* sends His messengers (and prophets) as symbols of His *rahma*. And as a result they become a channel through which God's *rahma* is dispensed among mankind.

Another prominent example of this is found in S.21:107, towards the end of *Sūrat al-Anbiyā'*, wherein referring to Prophet Muhammad the Qur'ān says, “We have sent you as a benevolence to the creatures of the world”, using again the word *rahma* denoting the sending of the Prophet as “the mercy” from God.^{282[30]}

Other verses which bear similar association between the prophets and the *rahma* are S.11:28 and 63 where Noah and Salih respectively speak of God's “grace” and “blessings”.

In the second part of the same verse i.e., 18:65b, we read, “and [Khidr has been] given knowledge from Us.” Sale continues the translation of this verse as, “...and whom we had taught wisdom from before us.” Amir-Ali puts it as “...and endowed him with knowledge from Ourselves.”

So Khidr is a “mercy” from God and he has been given knowledge from God. Here it seems plausible to argue that these qualities certainly allude to his elevated status. To possess divine knowledge is a quality of saints and prophets, but Khidr is evidently more than a saint, since he symbolizes God's “mercy” which in the Qur'ānic sense clearly refers to prophecy.

Commentators are more or less in agreement that the status of Moses is certainly higher than that of Khidr, since he (Moses) is not only a Messenger (*rasūl*) but also a prophet (*nabi*),^{282[31]} bearer of the divine revelation and provisions of the law. Khidr, on the other hand, does not hold these titles, although the Qur'ān calls him a ‘Servant’ of God. Ibn ‘Arabi's account of this encounter also sheds some light on the nature of their relationship. Netton, for example, points out that there is an

...overwhelming emphasis on rank and knowledge...for al-Khadir is aware that Moses hold the exalted rank of Messenger (*rasūl*) which he, al-Khadir, does not...^{282[32]}

However, to analyze the subsequent verse of *Sūrat al-Kahf*, verse 66, in this context, we find that it deals with Moses' request to be instructed by Khidr, which, seemingly at least, puts Khidr at a higher position than that of Moses. This further confirms the status of Khidr as a prophet, as mentioned in the previous verse.

The emphasis here is on two key words which perhaps determine the overall meaning of the verse, *atabi'ka* and *tu'allimanī* which may have direct bearing upon the status of Khidr. Ahmed Ali translates it as,

“...May I *attend upon you* that you may *instruct* me in the knowledge you have been taught of the right way?’ (emphasis added)

Amir-Ali has translated the key words as,

“...May I *follow thee* so that thou mayst teach me something of thy wisdom?’ (emphasis added)

As we can see here the translation of *tu'allimani* is ‘instruct me’ or ‘teach me’. Moses, therefore, is requesting Khidr to “instruct” him “in the knowledge...of the right way” (S.18:66b). Since Moses in the Islamic tradition is regarded as a prophet as well as a messenger; bearer of the divine commandments, and conveyer of God’s truth to his people, his seeking of knowledge from a non-prophet does not fit the criterion of the divine wisdom given to all prophets. A prophet is *rahma* of God as well as a bearer of the knowledge given to none other than prophets. It can be said that it would not be possible for Khidr, firstly, to have knowledge from God, and, secondly, to “instruct” Moses in that knowledge he is given by God, without being a prophet or for that matter *rahma* himself. It would be absurd to believe that Moses of all God’s messengers was less in knowledge than a non-prophet. On the other hand, it is also argued that Moses with whom Khidr’s meeting takes place is not the Moses of Banu Israel. In fact there is an *hadīth* which mentions such a claim while refuting it at the same time on the authority of ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās.282[33]

At this point, however, it must be noted that the concept of *rahma* is closely linked with divine ‘guidance’ either in the form of revelation given to the prophets or simply by their mere presence and witness unto mankind.282[34] The prophecy of Khidr thus is the ‘prophecy of saintship’ (*nubuwwatu’l-wilāyat*) whereas that of Moses is characterized as the ‘prophecy of institution’ (*nubuwwatu’l-tashrī*).282[35]

Going back to the origin of the story we find a different set of arguments emerging from the rationale behind Moses’ search for and subsequent meeting with Khidr. And this sheds further light on an overall understanding of the story. It begins with Moses making a claim about being the most learned of all men in the world.282[36]

[Due to this belief]...he no longer tried to acquire more knowledge. So God sought for an occasion to stimulate him to obtain more knowledge...[and one day after his address to his people] one of them asked him: ‘Can there be found anybody more learned than you?’ He replied: ‘No, such a man I never met’. Then God revealed: ‘Yes, such a man does exist. Our servant Khidr is is more learned than you are’...282[37]

As we can see, Moses, by holding such a belief, created a necessity of being instructed by someone who surpassed him in knowledge. Although one may argue that the reason for such an ‘instruction’ was the mannerism in which he proclaimed it,282[38] the fact remains that Moses was the most knowledgeable of all men of his time as he was a prophet of distinction in steadfastness and yet there was a sense of ‘the absolute’ in his tone for which God had instituted his meeting with Khidr.282[39]

It is in this context that most commentators regard Khidr as one of the prophets. For as the Qur'ānic concept of *rahma*, analysed above, also suggests the same and moreover indicates that both Moses and Khidr possess "some divine knowledge not possessed by the other."282[40]

On the one hand, Moses is placed above Khidr in rank as a messenger; on the other, it is argued that they both possess different sets of knowledge. This latter position is particularly held by Ibn 'Arabi, mainly, its order to present the elevated status of the esoteric knowledge and,

of the gnosis that perceives not only the necessity for and validity of [the] Law, hut also the inescapable validity and necessity of those aspects of cosmic becoming that elude the Law...282[41]

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End Notes

282[2] Sufi Ibrahim abn Adham quoted in the article on 'Khidr' in Cyril Glasses *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1989), 224-25.

282[3] Cf. Mahmoud M. Ayoub. *Islam: Faith and Practice* (Markham, Ontario: The Open Press Limited. 1989), 33-34; 65b.

282[4] Although this is the common translation of *Wali*, *Pir* and other related Islamic terms, it nevertheless obscures the considerable diversity underlying these terms. See PM. Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in al-Din Chishti* (Delhi: Oxford, 1989), 1.

282[5] Khidr is spelled in several ways: al-Khadir (in Oriental/German scholarship), Khezr and Khizr (in Persian and Indian accounts) and so on.

282[6] See note 73 in Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980). 449; c.f. A.J. Wensinck. 'Khadir' in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* no. 29 (Leyden: E.J. Brill. 1925), 861.

282[7] Extensive literature and references on al-Khidr are included in Haim Schwarzbaum's *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk-Literature* (Waldorf-Hessen Verlag fur Orientkunde, 1982), 17-18.

282[8] S.18:65 in the Qur'ān, tr. Ahmed Ali (Princeton. NJ: Princeton University Press, paperback edition, 1988). 256.

282[9] Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 449.

282[10] Yusuf Ali translates it as “one of Our servants.” *The Holy Qur'ān* (Lalmore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1938), 748.

282[11] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1975), 202.

282[12] “Muslim version of Elijah” George K. Anderson. *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence: Brown University Press. 1965), 409; Exhaustive material on Khidr’s resemblance with Elijah is presented in Friedlaenders “Khidr” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), 693-95.

282[13] Peter L. Wilson, “The Green Man: The Trickster Figure in Sufism”, in *Gnosis Magazine* 1991, 23.

282[14] On Rodwell, see W.M. Thackston Jr.. *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisai* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), xxiv.

282[15] Alexander H. Krappe. *The Science of Folklore* (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1930), 103.

282[16] However, he refers to the Wandering Jew as *Ahasver*. See Haim Schwarzbaum. *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends*, 17.

282[17] Schwarzbaum mentions several references to it in his excellent work *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends*. For instance Tabari’s *Tafsir* (Cairo: 1373). v. III, 28-29; and Tha’labi’s *‘Ara’is al-Majalis* (Cairo: 1324), 126. It is the intermingling with the wild beast which links Khidr to the prophet Jeremiah. I. Friedlaender has further linked it back to the legend of the ‘Wandering Jew.’ See Schwarzbaum, 167-68.

282[18] Historical identity here does not mean determining the actual person of Khidr in history but as it is related in the “divergent sources” such as prophetology, folklore, etc. See Henry Corbin. *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1969). 55.

282[19] See Wensinck “al-Khadir” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*. 861-865

282[20] Peter Wilson, “The Green Man...” *Gnosis*. 22.

282[21] George Sale. *The Koran*, (London: William Tegg. 1961), 244.

282[22] See A.J. Wensinck for his valuable analysis of these links in his long article on “al-Khadir” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 862.

282[23] *Ibid*

282[24] *The Holy Qur'ān* edited by The Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA. (Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur'ān Printing Complex. 1410 A.H.), 840.

282[25] S.18:60 Qur'ān. translation of Ahmned Ali. 255.

282[26] Sultan Hasan, *'Irfan al-Qur'ān* (Agra: Maktaba 'Irfan. n.d.). 113.

282[27] *Ibid*.

282[28] Hashim Amir-Ati, *The Message of the Qur'ān: Presented in Perspective* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1974), K-30. Sec. 328-330.

282[29] George Sale, *The Koran*, 244.

282[30] Note that here Ahmed Ali translates *rahma* as 'benevolence'; cf. A. Yusuf Ali's translation as 'mercy'.

282[31] See Hifzur Rahman. *Qisasul Qur'ān*, (Delhi: Nadwatul Musannifin, 1975), pt. 1, 545; cf. Ian Richard Netton. "Theophany as Paradox: Ibn 'Arabi's Account of al-Khadir in his *Fusus al-Hikam*" in the *Journal of the Muhiyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* XI: (1992), 18.

282[32] Nettoms. *Ibid*.

282[33] Hifzur Rahman. *Qisasul Qur'ān* 538; cf. Thackston, *The Tales of the Prophets*, 208.

282[34] Moses received the 'guidance' (revelation) as well as the 'mercy' from God whereas Mary received only the blessings and the 'mercy'. Cf. 6:154. 7:52: 19:21.

282[35] R.A. Nicholson. *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge: The University Press. 1921), 141.

282[36] Muhammad Shafi. *Ma'arif al-Qur'ān* (Karachi: Dar al-Ma'arif. 1978). vol. V: 591.

282[37] J.M.S. Baljon. (tr.). *A mystical Interpretation of Prophetic Tales by an Indian Muslim: Shah Wali Alla's Tawil al-Ahadith* (Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1973). 39-40.

282[38] Muhammad Shafi. *Ma'arif al-Qur'ān*. 591.

282[39] *Ibid*.

282[40] Netton. "Theophany as Paradox", 18.

282[41] R.WJ. Austin, *The Bezels of Wisdom* (New York: Paulist Press. 1980). 250.

²⁸³Nicolas footnote: *The Shi'i claim that the Imam Mahdi was born more than one thousand years ago, and that he will reappear with the appearance of a young man of twenty-five years of age notwithstanding his thousand years of existence. "It is not like that," says the Báb, "for if God is All-Powerful, the laws of matter are immutable. He proposes the following explanation — it is the essence, the immaterial breath of the Mahdi that God will return to a new material body. This body will grow until it assumes the age of twenty-five years and then will manifest the Sahib al-Zaman. Here the Báb adopts the doctrines of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i. The Shi'i believe in effect that the material body of the Imams subsists eternally in its integrity. For example, the Imam Husayn, even though buried for such a long time, still exists as a man and every Friday night, which is to say following our computation, every Thursday evening, he comes to the monastery of Bibi Shihrabanu. This abbey is situated to the left of the Shahzadih 'Abdu'l-'Azim, very close to Tihiran, and is said to enclose the tomb of the daughter of Yazdigird, last king (Sasanid) of Persia. As is known, Husayn married this princess, and now he does not fail, every week, to come here to fulfill his marital duties. On Friday morning the mutavalli shows to the pilgrims the linen which the Imam used the preceeding night and which he took the care of depositing at the baths before his departure. Ahmad Ahsa'i claims on the contrary that a material body, whichever it may be, rots and falls into dust, its elements entering into the Great All — the immaterial body alone subsists. From this the Báb permits himself to say, "It is in me that has entered the immaterial body of the Mahdi who has been dead for a thousand years." It is in this sense that he speaks of Khid.r. Shi'i tradition has Elijah and Khid.r as brothers. They were called to take part in the expedition of Alexander [the Great] in the Zulimat (shadows) in which was to be found the fountain of life. They were readying themselves to leave when their old and infirm father asked to accompany them to himself drink the water from this source. They refused at first, for Alexander wanted only to accept men of twenty-five to thirty years of age. But their father having affirmed that he would surely help them find the source of life, they consented to bring him along. They therefore left together and, following the counsels of their father, but without understanding to what purpose, they brought along a dry fish. They rejoined Alexander and directed themselves with him towards the land of Shadows. Once they arrived, each one went about to the right and to the left in the most profound obscurity. It is then that the father of the two prophets said to them, "Dip your fish into each source that you encounter, and if you fall upon the source of life, you will understand this in seeing the fish resuscitated." They obeyed, and after several fruitless attempts they could finally one day attest to the resurrection of the fish. They thus drank from the water and gathered some in a vase to bring to Alexander. But on the way, at the end of various accidents, the vase was broken. They could not therefore either enable the hero prophet to drink of this precious water nor indicate to him the place where the source had been foun, because of the perpetual obscurity in the midst of which they had voyaged. Immortal, they live still. One traverses the surface of the globe, the other the depth of the oceans. Some 'ulama — Shi'i, of course — have encountered them and give a portrait of them. "All that, these are lies," cries the Báb, "and if Zhid.r is living, he is before God — it is his immaterial body, otherwise said his soul, which still lives."*

It is the same for the devil, whose material body disappeared a long time ago. It is his immaterial breath

that lives in creation and incarnates itself in men. In whom does he especially incarnate himself? In those who have refused to believe in the Prophets at the moment of their appearance. It incarnates itself thus in this moment in those who oppose the Báb and who do not wish to believe in the divinity of his mission. Very elegantly, and with a single word, the Báb treats here the 'ulama, the mujtahid, all the official clergy as incarnations of the devil. He heckles them and mocks them. Furthermore, one must not believe that our author takes very seriously the arguments which he invokes here. He consents simply to place himself upon the terrain of his critics — "You say that I am not the Mahdi, and you give reasons for this, the like of which I demonstrate to be innane. I employ your own weapons to do battle with you. But in truth, the only reason that I am give to affirm that I am the Mahdi, it is that I am."

²⁸⁴Nicolas footnote: *It is pride that made Satan's fall.*

²⁸⁵Nicolas footnote: *You adore God, obey Him then. Do you think yourself wiser than Him that you come to question His orders? A Prophet presents himself in His Name, you scoff at him, you persecute him, you kill him, why? Because He has the appearance of a man and so you think yourself superior to him. Proud! Think of Satan!*

²⁸⁶Musa-Kazim, son of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, born 7 Safar 129 AH/27 October 745 CE, and died in prison on 25 Rajab 183 AH/1 September 799 CE.

²⁸⁷Fast enjoined upon all Muslims in the Qur'án. It is one month long, 30 days. Food and drink, tobacco and sexual relations are permitted after sundown and before sunrise but not during daylight hours.

²⁸⁸Khalif means "leader" and it came to denote, for most Muslims, who are now called the Sunnis, the caliphs who, by one means or another, became the functional leaders of the Muslim community. For Imami, Isma'ili and Druse Muslims, the "khalif" is their spiritual leader.

²⁸⁹Shoghi Effendi, writing in "God Passes By" (pp. 12-13) refers to "the eminent scholar, Mirza Ahmad-i-Azghandi, the most learned, the wisest and the most outstanding among the ulamas of Khurasan, who, in anticipation of the advent of the promised Qá'im, had compiled above twelve thousand traditions and prophecies concerning the time and character of the expected Revelation, had circulated them among His fellow-disciples, and had encouraged them to quote them extensively to all congregations and in all meetings." In "The Dawn-breakers" (p. 184) he translated an account by Muhammad Zarandi, Nabil-i-A'zam, who cites Mulla Sadiq Khurasani as his source for this story about Mirza Ahmad-i-Azghandi and the twelve thousand ahadith.

²⁹⁰Nicolas footnote: *The author of this work, which is comprised of twenty-four volumes, is Mulla Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, who lived around the year 800 of the hijra era. It is a collection of ahadith.*

²⁹¹Nicolas footnote: *The Báb.*

²⁹²Unidentified hadith.

²⁹³Hadith. Cited by Baha'u'llah in "Kitab-i-Iqan" (p. 255), and by 'Abdu'l-Baha in a talk ('Abdu'l-Baha on Divine Philosophy, p. 131, referring to "Kitab-i-Iqan") Baha'u'llah completes the hadith, by giving the second half of the phrase, identifying the one who is able to discern the seventy-one meanings: "We speak one word, and by it we intend one and seventy meanings; each one of these meanings we can explain." He relates a second hadith which has an even more precise and pointed indicator: "Every knowledge hath seventy meanings, of which one only is known amongst the people. And when the Qá'im shall arise, He shall reveal unto men all that which remaineth."

²⁹⁴Nicolas footnote: *Qati al-Sudur*.

²⁹⁵Nicolas footnote: *The Qur'án*.

²⁹⁶Nicolas footnote: *Bida' — the fact that God wants something and this thing does not come to be. Not that God does not know in principle that it will not be realized, for He knows it very well; but in the presence of certain events, He must give an order that He knows perfectly well will not be executed because other future events will impede it. It is thus that He promised the manifestation of the Mahdi for the thirtieth year of the hijra, but as men conducted themselves badly towards 'Ali, He removed the execution of His promise to the year 61. In that year, the Imam Husayn was killed and God postponed the manifestation to the year 200. That year again human evil impeded Him from giving us this blessing and since then He has no longer fixed a date for this appearance.*

²⁹⁷This tradition is cited in Baha'u'llah, "Gems of Divine Mysteries" (p. 19), and indicated as fulfilled in "Summons of the Lord of Hosts" (p. 68), "Proclamation of Baha'u'llah" (p. 18), "Tablets of Baha'u'llah revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas" (p. 13), "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" (p. 47). It is also explained by a Sunni Muslim commentator, to provide illuminative contrast: <http://www.pakistanlink.com/religion/2000/05-12.html>

Q 1. Prophet Muhammad -peace be upon him- is reported to have said that one of the signs of the "last days" will be the sun rising in the West. What is the meaning of the "the sun rising in the West?"

A 1. The Qur'án and Sunnah tell us that this world is not a permanent place. It will end. Just as individuals die, so this cosmic order will die. Every thing will be destroyed and then the Day of Judgment will take place. Allah will then create a permanent or eternal world. There are many Surahs of the Qur'án that speak about the end of this world. But only Allah knows when the end will be. Allah says in the Qur'án, "Verily the Hour is coming - My design is to keep it hidden - for every soul to receive its reward by the measure of its Endeavor." (Taha 20:15) Even the angel Gabriel (Jibril) and Prophet Muhammad -peace be upon both of them- did not know about the exact time of the Last Days. In the famous Hadith of Jibril, the Prophet -peace be upon him- was asked about the Last Hour and his answer to Jibril was "the one who is questioned does not know more than the questioner."

But the Prophet -peace be upon him- told us many signs of the Last Days and the Last Hour. Some are minor signs and some major signs. The scholars have collected from the Qur'án and Sunnah more than

seventy signs of the Last Days. Some signs are ominous or disastrous. One of the disastrous signs is the “rising of the sun from the West”. When this will happen it would indicate the end is very near. There are many Ahadith in almost all books of Hadith that speak about this sign of the Last Hour. There are many reports in Al-Bukhari and they all agree that this will be a terrible sign. There are many people, who when they will see this sign, would rush to believe in Allah, but it will be too late for them. The words of the Hadith are as follows:

Abu Hurairah -may Allah be pleased with him- said that the Prophet -peace be upon him- said, “The Hour will not come until the sun rises from the West. When people will see it then those who are on earth will believe but that is the time when its belief will not profit a soul which did not believe before that time. The Prophet -peace be upon him- then recited the Ayah: “Are they waiting to see if the angels come to them, or thy Lord (Himself), or certain of the Signs of thy Lord! The day that certain of the Signs of thy Lord do come, no good will it do to a soul to believe in them then, if it believed not before nor earned righteousness through its Faith. Say: ‘Wait ye: we too are waiting.’” (al-An’am 6:158) See al-Bukhari, Hadith 4269, 4270 and others. It is very strange that some Muslims now a days interpret this Hadith as a blessed sign. They say it means that before the end of the world Islam will spread in the Western countries. This Hadith does not indicate a blessed sign. It is not about the spread of Islam; it is actually against it. The Hadith says that when the sun will rise from the West, people’s faith will not be accepted. It is wrong to misinterpret the Hadith of the Prophet -peace be upon him. There are many other Ahadith that speak about the spread of Islam in the whole world -eastern as well as western. For example there is a famous Hadith in which the Prophet -peace be upon him- predicted that his message will reach to every place where the night and day has reached. Allah will not leave any home whether made of skin (i.e. a tent) or of bricks but the message of Islam will reach there. (See Musnad Ahmad, Hadith 16344)

²⁹⁸Sun of Truth in this context refers to the Manifestation of God.

²⁹⁹Nicolas footnote: *Muhammad*.

³⁰⁰Nicolas footnote: *The sun of Islam arose in Makka, and the Muslim conquest marched from the West to the East and came to dwell in Persia. It is there that this star lay down. It is thus Persia, the land of Fa, which is the West of Islam[the place where the star of Islam set], but, it is from this West that arises the Báb, the Sun of Truth.*

³⁰¹This appears to be a quotation from the writings of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa’i, who was, according to no less an authority than Professor Denis MacEoin, "Ahsa’i, Shaikh Ahmad b. Zayn al-Din," the title of his article in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 3 vols. - (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983 -). Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa’i is described in considerable detail, both as to his actions and his teachings, in Nabil’s Narrative, as edited and annotated by Shoghi Effendi, as “The Dawn-breakers” (pp. 1-18):

At a time when the shining reality of the Faith of Muhammad had been obscured by the ignorance, the fanaticism, and perversity of the contending sects into which it had fallen, there appeared above the horizon of the East [1] that luminous Star of Divine guidance, **Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i**. [2] He observed how those who professed the Faith of Islam had shattered its unity, sapped its force, perverted its purpose, and degraded its holy name. His soul was filled with anguish at the sight of the corruption and strife which characterised the Shi'ah sect of Islam. Inspired by the light that shone within him, [3] he arose with unerring vision, with fixed purpose, and sublime detachment to utter his protest against the betrayal of the Faith by that ignoble people. Aglow with zeal and conscious of the sublimity of his calling, he vehemently appealed not only to Shi'ah Islam but to all the followers of Muhammad through-

[1] His genealogy, according to his son Shaykh Abdu'llah, is the following: "Shaykh Ahmad-ibn-i-Zaynu'd-Din-ibn-i-Ibrahim-ibn-i-Sakhr-ibn-i-Ibrahim-ibn-i-Zahir-ibn-i-Ramadan-ibn-i-Rashid-ibn-i-Dahim-ibn-i-Shimruk- ibn-i-Sulih." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme" I, p. 1.)]

[2] Born Rajab, 1166 A.H., 24th of April-24th of May, 1753, in town of Ahsa in district of Ahsa, northeast of Arabian peninsula. (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 1.) Born a Shi'ah, though his ancestors were Sunnis. (Ibid., p. 2.) According to E. G. Browne ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note E, p. 235), Shaykh Ahmad was born in the year 1157 A.H. and died in 1242.]

[3] Siyyid Kazim, in his book entitled "Dalilu'l-Mutahayyirin," writes as follows: "Our master, one night, saw the Imam Hasan; upon him may the blessing of God rest! His Holiness put in his mouth his blessed tongue. From the adorable saliva of His Holiness he drew forth the sciences and the assistance of God. To the taste it was sweeter even than honey, more perfumed than the musk. It was also quite warm. When he came to himself and wakened from his dream, he inwardly radiated the light of divine contemplation; his soul overflowed with the blessings of God and became entirely severed from everything save God. "His faith, his trust in God and his resignation to the Will of the Most High grew apace. Because of a great love and an ardent desire which arose in his heart, he forgot to eat or to clothe himself except barely enough to sustain life." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 6.)]

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out the East, to awaken from the slumber of negligence and to prepare the way for Him who must needs be made manifest in the fulness of time, whose light alone could dissipate the mists of prejudice and ignorance which had enveloped that Faith. Forsaking his home and kindred, on one of the islands of Bahrayn, to the south of the Persian Gulf, he set out, as bidden by an almighty Providence, to unravel the mysteries of those verses of Islamic Scriptures which foreshadowed the advent of a new Manifestation. He was well aware of the dangers and perils that beset his path; he fully realised the crushing responsibility of his task. There burned in his soul the conviction that no reform, however drastic, within the Faith of Islam, could achieve the regeneration of this perverse people. He knew, and was destined by the Will of God to demonstrate, that nothing short of a new and independent

Revelation, as attested and foreshadowed by the sacred Scriptures of Islam, could revive the fortunes and restore the purity of that decadent Faith.[4]

Bereft of all earthly possessions, and detached from all save God, he, in the early days of the thirteenth century of the Hegira, when forty years of age, arose to dedicate the remaining days of his life to the task he felt impelled to shoulder. He first proceeded to Najaf and Karbila,[1] where in a few years he acquired familiarity with the prevailing thoughts and standards current among the learned men of Islam. There he came to be recognized as one of the authorised expounders of the Islamic Holy Writ, was declared a mujtahid, and soon obtained an ascendancy over the rest of his colleagues, who either visited or were residing in those holy cities. These came to regard him as one initiated into the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and qualified to unravel the abstruse utterances of Muhammad and of the imams of the Faith. As his influence increased, and the scope of his

[4] "He [Shaykh Ahmad] knew full well that he was chosen of God to prepare men's hearts for the reception of the more complete truth shortly to be revealed, and that through him the way of access to the hidden twelfth Imam Mihdi was reopened. But he did not set this forth in clear and unmistakable terms, lest 'the unregenerate' should turn again and rend him." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 15.)]

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authority widened, he found himself besieged on every side by an ever-increasing number of devoted enquirers who asked to be enlightened regarding the intricacies of the Faith, all of which he ably and fully expounded. By his knowledge and fearlessness he struck terror to the hearts of the Sufis and Neo-Platonists and other kindred schools of thought,[2] who envied his learning and feared his ruthlessness. Thereby he acquired added favour in the eyes of those learned divines, who looked upon these sects as the disseminators of obscure and heretical doctrines. Yet, great as was his fame and universal as was the esteem in which he was regarded, he despised all the honours which his admirers lavished upon him. He marvelled at their servile devotion to dignity and rank, and refused resolutely to associate himself with the objects of their pursuits and desires.

[1] "Karbila is about 55 miles S.W. of Baghdad on the banks of the Euphrates.... The tomb of Husayn is in the centre of the city, and of his brother Abbas in the S.E. quarter are the chief buildings." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 486.) Najaf is revered by the shi'ahs, as it enshrines the tomb of Imam Ali.

[2] "The chief peculiarities of Shaykh Ahmad's views seem to have been as follows. He declared that all knowledge and all sciences were contained in the Qur'án, and that therefore to understand the inner meanings of the latter in their entirety, a knowledge of the former must be acquired. To develop this doctrine, he used to apply cabalistic methods of interpretation to the sacred text, And exerted himself to acquire familiarity with the various sciences known to the Muslim world. He entertained the most exaggerated veneration for the Imams, especially the Imam Ja'far-i-Sadiq, the sixth of them in

succession, whose words he would often quote.... About the future life, and the resurrection of the body also, he held views which were generally considered to be heterodox, as previously mentioned. He declared that the body of man was composed of different portions, derived from each of the four elements and the nine heavens, and that the body wherewith he was raised in the resurrection contained only the latter components, the former returning at death to their original sources. This subtle body, which alone escaped destruction, he called *Jism-i-Huriqliya*, the latter being supposed to be a Greek word. He asserted that it existed potentially in our present bodies, 'like glass in stone.' Similarly he asserted that, in the case of the Night-ascent of the Prophet to Heaven, it was this, and not his material body, which performed the journey. On account of these views, he was pronounced unorthodox by the majority of the ulamas, and accused of holding the doctrines of Mulla Sadra, the greatest Persian philosopher of modern times." (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1889, article 12, pp. 890-91.)]

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Having achieved his purpose in those cities, and inhaling the fragrance which wafted upon him from Persia, he felt in his heart an irrepressible yearning to hasten to that country. He concealed from his friends, however, the real motive that impelled him to direct his steps towards that land. By way of the Persian Gulf, he hastened unto the land of his heart's desire, ostensibly for the purpose of visiting the shrine of the Imam Rida in Mashhad.[1] He was filled with eagerness to unburden his soul, and searched zealously for those to whom he could deliver the secret which to no one he had as yet divulged. Upon his arrival at Shiraz, the city which enshrined that concealed Treasure of God, and from which the voice of the Herald of a new Manifestation was destined to be proclaimed, he repaired to the *Masjid-i-Jum'ih*, a mosque which in its style and shape bore a striking resemblance to the holy shrine of Mecca. Many a time did he, whilst gazing upon that edifice, observe: "Verily, this house of God betokens such signs as only those who are endowed with understanding can perceive. Methinks he who conceived and built it was inspired of God." [2] How often and how passionately he extolled that city! Such was the praise he lavished upon it that his hearers, who were only too familiar with its mediocrity, were astonished at the tone of his language. "Wonder not," he said to those who were surprised, "for ere long the secret of my words will be made manifest to you. Among

[1] In the ninth century the remains of the Imam Rida, son of the Imam Musa and eighth of the twelve Imams, were interred in Mashhad.]

[2] "In the country of Fars, there is a Mosque in the center of which rises a structure similar to the *Ka'bih*, (*Masjid-i-Jum'ih*). It was built only as a sign indicating the Manifestation of the Will of God through the erection of the house in that land. [Allusion to the new Mecca, i.e., the house of the *Báb* in Shiraz.] Blessed be he who worships God in that land; truly we, too, worshipped God there, and prayed for him who had erected that building." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 2, p. 151.)

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you there shall be a number who will live to behold the glory of a Day which the prophets of old have yearned to witness." So great was his authority in the eyes of the ulamas who met and conversed with him, that they professed themselves incapable of comprehending the meaning of his mysterious allusions and ascribed their failure to their own deficient understanding.

Having sown the seeds of Divine knowledge in the hearts of those whom he found receptive to his call, Shaykh Ahmad set out for Yazd, where he tarried awhile, engaged continually in the dissemination of such truths as he felt urged to reveal. Most of his books and epistles were written in that city.[1] Such was the fame he acquired,[2] that the ruler of Persia, Fath-'Ali Shah, was moved to address to him from Tihiran a written message,[3] calling upon him to explain certain specific questions related to the abstruse teachings of the Muslim Faith, the meaning of which the leading ulamas of his realm had been unable to unfold. To this he readily answered in the form of an epistle to which he gave the name of "Risaly-i-Sultaniyyih." The Shah was so pleased with the tone and subject matter of that epistle that he forthwith sent him a second message, this time extending to him an invitation to visit his court. Replying to this second imperial message,

[1] A. L. M. Nicolas, in Chapter 5 of his book, "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," gives a list of no less than ninety-six volumes as representing the entire literary output of this prolific writer. Among them, the more important are the following:

1. Commentary on the Ziyaratu'l Jami'atu'l-Kabirih of Shaykh Hadi.
2. Commentary on the verse "Qu'l Huvallah-u-Ahad."
3. Risaly-i-Khaqaniyyih, in answer to Fath-'Ali Shah's question regarding the superiority of the Qá'im over His ancestors.
4. On dreams.
5. Answer to Shaykh Musay-i-Bahrayni regarding the position and claims of the Sáhibu'z-Zamán.
6. Answer to the Sufis.
7. Answer to Mulla Mihdiy-i-Astirabadi on the knowledge of the soul.
8. On the joys and pains of the future life. God.
10. On the Resurrection.

[2] "The news of his arrival caused a great stir and certain Ulamas among the most celebrated received him with reverence. They accorded him great consideration and the inhabitants of the town did likewise. All of the Ulamas came to see him. It was well known that he was the most learned among the most learned." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," p. 18.)

[3] A. L. M. Nicolas, in his book "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," pp. 19-20, refers to a second letter addressed by the Shah to Shaykh Ahmad: "The Shah, forewarned, wrote again telling him that evidently it was his duty, his, the King's, to go out of his way to come to Yazd to see the illustrious and holy person whose feet were a blessing to the province upon whose soil they had trodden, but because of political reasons of high importance he could not, at this moment, leave the capital. Besides it was necessary, he said, in case of change of residence, to bring with him a force of at least ten thousand men, and, as the town of Yazd was too small to support such a large population, the arrival of so many troops would most certainly occasion a famine. 'You would not wish such a calamity to occur, I am quite certain, and I think therefore that, although I am of very small importance compared to you, you will consent, nevertheless to come to me.'"

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[Illustrations: FATH-'ALI SHAH AND SONS]

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he wrote the following: "As I had intended ever since my departure from Najaf and Karbila to visit and pay my homage to the shrine of the Imam Rida in Mashhad, I venture to hope that your Imperial Majesty will graciously allow me to fulfil the vow which I have made. Later on, God willing, it is my hope and purpose to avail myself of the honour which your Imperial Majesty has deigned to confer upon me.

Among those who, in the city of Yazd, were awakened by the message of that bearer of the light of God, was Haji Abdu'l-Vahhab, a man of great piety, upright and God-fearing. He visited **Shaykh Ahmad** each day in the company of a certain Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq-i-Yazdi, who was noted for his authority and learning. On certain occasions, however, in order to talk confidentially with Abdu'l-Vahhab, **Shaykh Ahmad**, to the great surprise of the learned Abdu'l-Khaliq, would ask him to retire from his presence and leave him alone with his chosen and favoured disciple. This marked preference shown to so modest and illiterate a man as Abdu'l-Vahhab was a cause of great surprise to his companion, who was only too conscious of his own superiority and attainments. Later, however, when **Shaykh Ahmad** had departed from Yazd, Abdu'l-Vahhab retired from the society of men and came to be regarded as a Sufi. By the orthodox leaders of that community, however, such as the Ni'matu'llah and Dhahabi, he was denounced as an intruder and was suspected of a desire to rob them of their leadership. Abdu'l-Vahhab, for whom the Sufi doctrine had no special attraction, scorned their false imputations and shunned their society. He associated with none except Haji Hasan-i-Nayini, whom he had chosen as his intimate friend and to whom he confided the secret with which he had been entrusted by his master. When Abdu'l-Vahhab died, this friend, following his example, continued to pursue the path which he had directed him to tread, and announced to every receptive soul the tidings of God's fast-approaching Revelation.

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Mirza Mahmud-i-Qamsari, whom I met in Kashan, and who at that time was an old man over ninety years of age and was greatly beloved and revered by all those who knew him, related to me the following story: "I recall when in my youth, at the time when I was living in Kashan, I heard of a certain man in Nayin who had arisen to announce the tidings of a new Revelation, and under whose spell fell all who heard him, whether scholars, officials of the government, or the uneducated among the people. His influence was such that those who came in contact with him renounced the world and despised its riches. Curious to ascertain the truth, I proceeded, unsuspected by my friends, to Nayin, where I was able to verify the statements that were current about him. His radiant countenance bespoke the light that had been kindled in his soul. I heard him, one day, after he had offered his morning prayer, speak words such as these: 'Ere long will the earth be turned into a paradise. Ere long will Persia be made the shrine round which will circle the peoples of the earth.' One morning, at the hour of dawn, I found him fallen upon his face, repeating in wrapt devotion the words 'Allah-u-Akbar.' [1] To my great surprise he turned to me and said: 'That which I have been announcing to you is now revealed. At this very hour the light of the promised One has broken and is shedding illumination upon the world. O Mahmud, verily I say, you shall live to behold that Day of days.' The words which that holy man addressed to me kept ringing in my ears until the day when, in the year sixty, I was privileged to hear the Call that arose from Shiraz. I was, alas, unable, because of my infirmities, to hasten to that city. Later, when the Báb, the herald of the new Revelation, arrived in Kashan and for three nights lived as a guest in the house of Haji Mirza Jani, I was unaware of His visit and so missed the honour of attaining His presence. Sometime afterwards, whilst conversing with the followers of the Faith, I was informed that the birthday of the Báb fell on the first day of the month of Muharram of the year 1235 A.H. [2] I realised that the day to which Haji Hasan-i-Nayini had referred did not correspond with this date, that there was actually a difference of two years between them. This thought

[1] "God is Most Great."

[2] October 20, 1819 A.D.

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sorely perplexed me. Long after, however, I met a certain Haji Mirza Kamalu'd-Din-i-Naraqi, who announced to me the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, and who shared with me a number of verses from the 'Qasídiy-i-Varqá'íyyih' as well as certain passages of the Persian and Arabic 'Hidden Words.' I was moved to the depths of my soul as I heard him recite those sacred words. The following I still vividly remember: 'O Son of Being! Thy heart is my home; sanctify it for my descent. Thy spirit is my place of revelation; cleanse it for my manifestation. O Son of Earth! Wouldst thou have me, seek none other than me; and wouldst thou gaze upon my beauty, close thine eyes to the world and all that is therein; for my will and the will of another than I, even as fire and water, cannot dwell together in one heart.' I asked him the date of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh. 'The dawn of the second day of Muharram,' he replied, 'of the year 1233 A.H.' [1] I immediately remembered the words of Haji Hasan and recalled the day on which they were spoken. Instinctively I fell prostrate on the ground and exclaimed: 'Glorified art Thou, O my God, for having enabled me to attain unto this promised Day. If now I be called to

Thee, I die content and assured." That very year, the year 1274 A.H., [2] that venerable and radiant soul yielded his spirit to God.

This account which I heard from the lips of Mirza Mahmud-i-Qamsari himself, and which is still current amongst the people, is assuredly a compelling evidence of the perspicacity of the late Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i and bears eloquent testimony to the influence he exercised upon his immediate disciples. The promise he gave them was eventually fulfilled, and the mystery with which he fired their souls was unfolded in all its glory.

During those days when Shaykh Ahmad was preparing to depart from Yazd, Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti,[3] that other luminary of Divine guidance, set out from his native province of Gilan with the object of visiting Shaykh Ahmad, ere the

[1] November 12, 1817 A.D.

[2] 1857-8 A.D.

[3] "His [Siyyid Kazim's] family were merchants of repute. If his father was named Aqa Siyyid Qasim. When twelve years old, he was living at Ardibil near the tomb of Shaykh Safi'u'd-Din Ishaq, the descendant of the seventh Imam Musa Kazim and the ancestor of the Safavi kings. One night in a dream it was signified to him by one of the illustrious progenitors of the buried saint that he should put himself under the spiritual guidance of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i, who was at this time residing at Yazd. He accordingly proceeded thither and enrolled himself amongst the disciples of Shaykh Ahmad, in whose doctrine he attained such eminence that on the Shaykh's death he was unanimously recognized as the leader of the Shaykhi school." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note E, p. 238)

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latter undertook his pilgrimage to Khurasan. In the course of his first interview with him, Shaykh Ahmad spoke these words: "I welcome you, O my friend! How long and how eagerly have I waited for you to come and deliver me from the arrogance of this perverse people! I am oppressed by the shamelessness of their acts and the depravity of their character. 'Verily, We proposed to the heavens, and to the earth, and to the mountains, to receive the trust of God, but they refused the burden, and they feared to receive it. Man undertook to bear it; and he, verily, hath proved unjust, ignorant.'"

This Siyyid Kazim had already, from his early boyhood, shown signs of remarkable intellectual power and spiritual insight. He was unique among those of his own rank and age. At the age of eleven, he had committed to memory the whole of the Qur'án. At the age of fourteen, he had learned by heart a prodigious number of prayers and recognized traditions of Muhammad. At the age of eighteen, he had composed a commentary on a verse of the Qur'án known as the Ayatu'l-Kursi, which had excited the wonder and the admiration of the most learned of his day. His piety, the gentleness of his character, and his humility were such that all who knew him, whether young or old, were profoundly impressed.

In the year 1231 A.H.,[1] when only twenty-two years old, he, forsaking home, kindred, and friends, departed from Gilan, intent upon attaining the presence of him who had so nobly arisen to announce the approaching dawn of a Divine Revelation. He had been in the company of Shaykh Ahmad for only a few weeks, when the latter, turning to him one day, addressed him in these words: "Remain in your house and cease attending my lectures. Such of my disciples as may feel perplexed will turn henceforth to you, and will seek to obtain from you directly whatsoever assistance they may require. You will, through the knowledge which the Lord your God has bestowed upon you, resolve their problems and tran-

[1] 1815-16 A.D.

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quillise their hearts. By the power of your utterance you will help to revive the sorely neglected Faith of Muhammad, your illustrious ancestor." These words addressed to Siyyid Kazim excited the resentment and kindled the envy of the prominent disciples of Shaykh Ahmad, among whom figured Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani and Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq-i-Yazdi. So compelling was the dignity of Siyyid Kazim, however, and so remarkable were the evidences of his knowledge and wisdom, that these disciples were awed and felt compelled to submit.

Shaykh Ahmad, having thus committed his disciples to the care of Siyyid Kazim, left for Khurasan. There he tarried awhile, in the close vicinity of the holy shrine of the Imam

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Rida in Mashhad. Within its precincts he pursued with undiminished zest the course of his labours. By resolving the intricacies that agitated the minds of the seekers, he continued to prepare the way for the advent of the coming Manifestation. In that city he became increasingly conscious that the Day which was to witness the birth of the promised One could not be far distant. The promised hour, he felt, was fast approaching. From the direction of Nur, in the province of Mazindaran, he was able to perceive the first glimmerings that heralded the dawn of the promised Dispensation. To him the Revelation foreshadowed in these following traditional utterances was at hand: "Ere long shall ye behold the countenance of your Lord resplendent as the moon in its full glory. And yet, ye shall fail to unite in acknowledging His truth and embracing His Faith." And "One of the most mighty signs that shall signalise the advent of the promised Hour is this: 'A woman shall give birth to One who shall be her Lord.'"

Shaykh Ahmad therefore set his face towards Nur and, accompanied by Siyyid Kazim and a number of his distinguished disciples, proceeded to Tihiran. The Shah of Persia, being informed of the approach of Shaykh Ahmad to his capital, commanded the dignitaries and officials of Tihiran to go out to meet him. He directed them to extend a cordial expression of welcome on his behalf. The distinguished visitor and his companions were royally entertained by the Shah, who visited him in person and declared him

to be "the glory of his nation and an ornament to his people." [1] In those days, there was born a Child in an ancient and noble family of Nur, [2] whose father was Mirza Abbas, better known as Mirza Buzurg, a favoured minister of the Crown. That Child was Bahá'u'lláh. [3] At the hour of dawn, on the second day

[1] "The Shah felt his good will and respect for the Shaykh grow increasingly from day to day. He felt obliged to obey him and would have considered it an act of blasphemy to oppose him. However, at this time, a succession of earthquakes occurred in Rayy and many were destroyed. "The Shah had a dream in which it was revealed to him that, if Shaykh Ahmad had not been there, the entire city would have been destroyed and all the inhabitants killed. He awakened terrified and his faith in the Shaykh grew apace." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 21.)

[2] Mirza Abu'l-Fadl asserts in his writings that the genealogy of Bahá'u'lláh can be traced back to the ancient Prophets of Persia as well as to its kings who ruled over the land prior to the Arab invasion.

[3] His name was Mirza Husayn-'Ali.

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of Muharram, in the year 1233 A.H. [1], the world, unaware of its significance, witnessed the birth of Him who was destined to confer upon it such incalculable blessings. Shaykh Ahmad, who recognized in its full measure the meaning of this auspicious event, yearned to spend the remaining days of his life within the precincts of the court of this Divine, this new-born King. But this was not to be. His thirst unallayed, and his yearning unsatisfied, he felt compelled to submit to God's irrevocable decree, and, turning his face away from the city of his Beloved, proceeded to Kirmanshah.

The governor of Kirmanshah, Prince Muhammad-'Ali Mirza, the Shah's eldest son and the ablest member of his house, had already begged permission of his Imperial Majesty to enable him to entertain and serve in person Shaykh Ahmad. [2] So favoured was the Prince in the eyes of the Shah, that his request was immediately granted. Wholly resigned to his destiny, Shaykh Ahmad bade farewell to Tihran. Ere his departure from that city, he breathed a prayer that this hidden Treasure of God, now born amongst his countrymen, might be preserved and cherished by them, that they might recognize the full measure of His blessedness and glory, and might be enabled to proclaim His excellence to all nations and peoples.

Upon his arrival in Kirmanshah, Shaykh Ahmad decided to select a number of the most receptive from among his shi'ah disciples, and, by devoting his special attention to their enlightenment, to enable them to become the active supporters of the Cause of the promised Revelation. In the series of books and epistles which he undertook to write, among which figures his well-known work Sharhu'z-Ziyarih, he extolled in clear and vivid language the virtues of the imams of the Faith, and laid special stress upon the allusions which they had made to the coming of the promised One. By his repeated references to

Husayn, he meant, however, none other than the Husayn who was yet to be revealed; and by his allusions to the ever-recurrent name Ali, he intended not the

[1] November 12, 1817 A.D.

[2] "Kirmanshah awaited him with great impatience. The Prince Governor Muhammad-'Ali Mirza had sent the entire town to meet him and they had erected tents in which to receive him at Chah-Qilan. The Prince went even beyond to the Taj-Abad which lies four farsakhs distant from the town." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 30.)

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Ali who had been slain, but the Ali recently born. To those who questioned him regarding the signs that must needs herald the advent of the Qá'im, he emphatically asserted the inevitableness of the promised Dispensation. In the very year the Báb was born, Shaykh Ahmad suffered the loss of his son, whose name was Shaykh Ali. To his disciples who mourned his loss he spoke these words of comfort: "Grieve not, O my friends, for I have offered up my son, my own Ali, as a sacrifice for the Ali whose advent we all await. To this end have I reared and prepared him."

The Báb, whose name was Ali-Muhammad, was born in Shiraz, on the first of Muharram, in the year 1235 A.H. He was the descendant of a house renowned for its nobility, which traced its origin to Muhammad Himself. His father, Siyyid Muhammad-Rida, as well as His mother, were descendants of the Prophet, and belonged to families of recognized standing. The date of His birth confirmed the truth of the saying attributed to the Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful: "I am two years younger than my Lord." The mystery of this utterance, however, remained unrevealed except to those who sought and recognized the truth of the new Revelation. It was He, the Báb, who, in His first, His most weighty and exalted Book, revealed this passage concerning Bahá'u'lláh: "O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed Myself wholly for Thee; I have consented to be cursed for Thy sake; and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient witness unto Me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days!"

While Shaykh Ahmad was sojourning in Kirmanshah, he received so many evidences of ardent devotion from Prince Muhammad-'Ali Mirza that on one occasion he was moved to refer to the Prince in such terms: "Muhammad-'Ali I regard as my own son, though he be a descendant of Fath-'Ali." A considerable number of seekers and disciples thronged his house and eagerly attended his lectures. To none, however, did he feel inclined to show the consideration and affectionate regard which characterised his attitude towards Siyyid Kazim. He seemed to have singled him out from among the multitude that crowded to see him, and to be preparing him to carry on with undiminished vigour his work after his death. One

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of his disciples, one day, questioned Shaykh Ahmad concerning the Word which the promised One is expected to utter in the fulness of time, a Word so appallingly tremendous that the three hundred and thirteen chiefs and nobles of the earth would each and all flee in consternation as if overwhelmed by its stupendous weight. To him Shaykh Ahmad replied: "How can you presume to sustain the weight of the Word which the chieftains of the earth are incapable of bearing? Seek not to gratify an impossible desire. Cease asking me this question, and beseech forgiveness from God." That presumptuous questioner again pressed him to disclose the nature of that Word. At last Shaykh Ahmad replied: "Were you to attain that Day, were you to be told to repudiate the guardianship of Ali and to denounce its validity, what would you say?" "God forbid!" he exclaimed. "Such things can never be. That such words should proceed out of the mouth of the promised One is to me inconceivable." How grievous the mistake he made, and how pitiful his plight! His faith was weighed in the balance, and was found wanting, inasmuch as he failed to recognize that He who must needs be made manifest is endowed with that sovereign power which no man dare question. His is the right "to command whatsoever He willeth, and to decree that which He pleaseth." Whoever hesitates, whoever, though it be for the twinkling of an eye or less, questions His authority, is deprived of His grace and is accounted of the fallen. And yet few, if any, among those who listened to Shaykh Ahmad in that city, and heard him unfold the mysteries of the allusions in the sacred Scriptures, were able to appreciate the significance of his utterances or to apprehend their purpose. Siyyid Kazim, his able and distinguished lieutenant, alone, could claim to have understood his meaning.

After the death of Prince Muhammad-'Ali Mirza,[1] Shaykh Ahmad, freed from the urgent solicitations of the Prince to extend his sojourn in Kirmanshah, transferred his residence to Karbila. Though to outward seeming he was circling round the shrine of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada',[2] the Imam Husayn, his heart, whilst he performed those rites, was set upon that true Husayn, the only object of his devotions. A host of

[1] 1237. A.H.

[2] "The Prince of Martyrs."

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the most distinguished ulamas and mujtahids thronged to see him. Many began to envy his reputation, and a number sought to undermine his authority. However much they strove, they failed to shake his position of undoubted preeminence amongst the learned men of that city. Eventually that shining light was summoned to shed its radiance upon the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Thither he journeyed, there he pursued with unstinted devotion his labours, and there he was laid to rest beneath the shadow of the Prophet's sepulchre, for the understanding of whose Cause he had so faithfully laboured.

Ere he departed from Karbila, he confided to Siyyid Kazim, his chosen successor, the secret of his mission,[1] and instructed him to strive to kindle in every receptive heart the fire that had burned so brightly within him. However much Siyyid Kazim insisted on accompanying him as far as Najaf,

Shaykh Ahmad refused to comply with his request. "You have no time to lose," were the last words which he addressed to him. "Every fleeting hour should be fully and wisely utilised. You should gird up the loin of endeavour and strive day and night to rend asunder, by the grace of God and by the hand of wisdom and loving-kindness, those veils of heedlessness that have blinded the eyes of men. For verily I say, the Hour is drawing nigh, the Hour I have besought God to spare me from witnessing, for the earthquake of the Last Hour will be tremendous. You should pray to God to be spared the overpowering trials of that Day, for neither of us is capable of withstanding its sweeping force. Others, of greater endurance and power, have been destined to bear this stupendous weight, men whose hearts are sanctified from all earthly things, and whose strength is reinforced by the potency of His power."

Having spoken these words, Shaykh Ahmad bade him farewell, urged him to face valiantly the trials that must needs afflict him, and committed him to the care of God.

[1] A. L. M. Nicolas, in his preface to "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, quotes the following as having been spoken by Shaykh Ahmad regarding Siyyid Kazim: "There is only Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti who understands my objective and no one but him understands it.... Seek the science after me from Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti who has acquired it directly from me, who learned it from the Imams, who learned it from the Prophet to whom God had given it.... He is the only one who understands me!"

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In Karbila, Siyyid Kazim devoted himself to the work initiated by his master, expounded his teachings, defended his Cause, and answered whatever questions perplexed the minds of his disciples. The vigour with which he prosecuted his task inflamed the animosity of the ignorant and envious. "For forty years," they clamoured, "we have suffered the pretentious teachings of Shaykh Ahmad to be spread with no opposition whatever on our part. We no longer can tolerate similar pretensions on the part of his successor, who rejects the belief in the resurrection of the body, who repudiates the literal interpretation of the 'Mi'raj,'[1] who regards the signs of the coming Day as allegorical, and who preaches a doctrine heretical in character and subversive of the best tenets of orthodox Islam." The louder their clamour and protestations, the firmer grew the determination of Siyyid Kazim to prosecute his mission and fulfil his trust. He addressed an epistle to Shaykh Ahmad, wherein he set forth at length the calumnies that had been uttered against him, and acquainted him with the character and extent of their opposition. In it he ventured to enquire as to how long he was destined to submit to the unrelenting fanaticism of a stubborn and ignorant people, and prayed to be enlightened regarding the time when the promised One was to be made manifest. To this Shaykh Ahmad replied: "Be assured of the grace of your God. Be not grieved at their doings. The mystery of this Cause must needs be made manifest, and the secret of this Message must needs be divulged.[2] I can say no more, I can appoint

[1] "The Ascent" of Muhammad to Heaven.

[2] The Báb, Himself, refers to this passage and confirms it in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih": "The words of the revered Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i are well known. They contain numerous allusions to the subject of the

Manifestation. For example, he has written with his own hand to Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti: 'Just as it is necessary in order to build a house to have suitable ground, so also for this Manifestation must the moment be propitious. But here one cannot give an answer clearly foretelling the moment. Soon we shall know it with certainty.' That which you have heard so often yourself from Siyyid Kazim, is not that an explanation? Did he not reiterate every minute — 'You do not wish then that I should go away so that God may appear?'" ("The Book of the Seven Proofs," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 58.) "There is also the anecdote referring to Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i on his way to Mecca. It has been proven that this anecdote is authentic and hence there is something which is certain. The disciples of the deceased have related the sayings which they have heard and also certain personages were mentioned such as Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq and Murtada-Quli. Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq relates that the Shaykh said to them one day: 'Pray that you may not be present at the beginning of the Manifestation and of the Return, as there will be many civil wars.' He added: 'If any one of you should still be living at that time, he shall see strange things between the years sixty and sixty-seven. And what strange thing can be more strange than the very Being of the Manifestation? You will be there and you will witness another extraordinary event; that is to say, God, in order to bring about the victory of the Manifestation, will raise up a Being who will speak his own thoughts without ever having been instructed by anyone.'" (Ibid., pp. 59-60.)

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no time. His Cause will be made known after Hin.[1] 'Ask me not of things which, if revealed unto you, might only pain you.'"

How great, how very great, is His Cause, that even to so exalted a personage as Siyyid Kazim words such as these should have been addressed! This answer of Shaykh Ahmad imparted solace and strength to the heart of Siyyid Kazim, who, with redoubled determination, continued to withstand the onslaught of an envious and insidious enemy.

Shaykh Ahmad died soon after,[2] in the year 1242 A.H., at the age of eighty-one, and was laid to rest in the cemetery of Baqi',[3] in the close vicinity of the resting place of Muhammad in the holy city of Medina.

[1] According to the Abjad notation, the numerical value of the word "Hin" is 68. It was in the year 1268 A.H. that Bahá'u'lláh, while confined in the Siyah-Chal of Tihran received the first intimations of His Divine Mission. Of this He hinted in the odes which He revealed in that year.

[2] He died in a place called Haddih, in the neighbourhood of Medina. (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 60.)

[3] "His body was carried to Medina where it was buried in the Baqi cemetery, behind the walls of the cupola of the Prophet, on the south side, under the drain spout of the Mihrab. They say that there also is to be found the tomb of Fatimih facing that of Baytu'l-Hazan." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le

Shaykhisme," I, pp. 60-61.) "The death of Shaykh Ahmad put an end for a few days to the conflict, and the anger seemed appeased. Moreover it was at this time that Islam received a terrible blow and that its power was broken. The Russian Emperor defeated the Moslem nations and most of the provinces, inhabited by the Moslem peoples, fell into the hands of the Russian armies." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, p. 5.) "On the other hand, it was thought that Shaykh Ahmad being now dead, his doctrine would definitely disappear with him. Peace lasted for nearly two years; but the Muhammadans returned quickly to their former sentiments as soon as they saw that the light of the doctrine of the deceased still radiated over the world, thanks to Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, the best, the most faithful disciple of Shaykh Ahmad, and his successor." (Ibid., pp. 5-6.)

³⁰²Nicolas footnote: *That is to say, in conformity with the above explanation.*

³⁰³Unidentified commentary of the Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq on this verse of the Qur'án.

³⁰⁴Qur'án LXXX:24.

³⁰⁵Nicolas footnote: *It is known that the mujtahidun interpret in their fashion the sacred texts, and that their decisions begin with these words, "Akimtu bi-zalik", meaning "I ordain that".*

³⁰⁶Nicolas footnote: *The Bábís.*

³⁰⁷The followers of the Bayán, in other words, the Bábís.

³⁰⁸Qur'án II:12.

³⁰⁹This refers to the many outstandingly learned followers of the Báb. Baha'u'llah refers to this proof of the prophetic station of the Báb in *Kitab-i-Iqan* (pp. 222-224):

"In this most resplendent Dispensation, however, this most mighty Sovereignty, a number of illumined divines, of men of consummate learning, of doctors of mature wisdom, have attained unto His Court, drunk the cup of His divine Presence, and been invested with the honour of His most excellent favour. They have renounced, for the sake of the Beloved, the world and all that is therein. We will mention the names of some of them, that perchance it may strengthen the faint-hearted, and encourage the timorous.

"Among them was Mulla Husayn, who became the recipient of the effulgent glory of the Sun of divine Revelation. But for him, God would not have been established upon the seat of His mercy, nor ascended the throne of eternal glory. Among them also was Siyyid Yahya, that unique and peerless figure of his age,

Mulla Muhammad Aliy-i-Zanjani

Mulla Aliy-i-Bastami

Mulla Sa'id-i-Barfurushi

Mulla Ni'matu'llah-i-Mazindarani

Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili

Mulla Mihdiy-i-Khu'i

Siyyid Husayn-i-Turshizi

Mulla Mihdiy-i-Kandi

Mulla Baqir

Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq-i-Yazdi

Mulla Aliy-i-Baraqani

and others, well nigh four hundred in number, whose names are all inscribed upon the "Guarded Tablet" of God.

"All these were guided by the light of that Sun of divine revelation, confessed and acknowledged His truth. Such was their faith, that most of them renounced their substance and kindred, and cleaved to the good-pleasure of the All-Glorious. They laid down their lives for their Well-Beloved, and surrendered their all in His path. Their breasts were made targets for the darts of the enemy, and their heads adorned the spears of the infidel. No land remained which did not drink the blood of these embodiments of detachment, and no sword that did not bruise their necks. Their deeds, alone, testify to the truth of their words. Doth not the testimony of these holy souls, who have so gloriously risen to offer up their lives for their Beloved that the whole world marvelled at the manner of their sacrifice, suffice the people of this day? Is it not sufficient witness against the faithlessness of those who for a trifle betrayed their faith, who bartered away immortality for that which perisheth, who gave up the Kawthar of the divine Presence for salty springs, and whose one aim in life is to usurp the property of others? Even as thou dost witness how all of them have busied themselves with the vanities of the world, and have strayed far from Him Who is the Lord, the Most High."

³¹⁰This identifies the recipient of Dala'il-sab'ih as a Shaykhi, a follower of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i and Siyyid Kazim Rashti.

³¹¹The Shaykhi 'ulama' engaged in many controversies with the other Ithna 'Ashari 'ulama' of the two holy cities, Najaf and Karbila, and regarded them as misguided on a number of doctrinal issues. Of course, these 'ulama', being of the mainstream, also regarded the Shaykhis as misguided, and even as heretical.

³¹²Nicolas footnote: *If you are a true Shaykhi, you must believe in me, for more distinguished ones than you have [declared their] faith in my mission. If you are not one of them, here is one whose name conforms to mine, because mine is represented by the number 202, which represents equally that of Mulla Muhammad 'Ali Ganjani. This one was an enemy of the Shaykh, but he believed in me. He had a mason who, although ignorant, let himself be guided by good sense and censored the ways of the mujtahidun in saying, "Everything that they decide in their judgments is but a product of their imagination, for the door of knowledge is closed."* This refers to the doctrine of the closure of the door of ijtihad with the major occultation of the twelfth Imam. According to this doctrine, no infallible interpretation can be made of the Qur'an and the hadith subsequent to this major occultation, until the appearance of the Mahdi, with is the return of the twelfth Imam. Hence, all of the decisions of the

mujtahidun are provisional in nature. Ijtihad is described in the following statement by Murtada Mutahhari (in "Bahthi dar barayi Marja'iyat wa Ruhaniyat", Tihran, 1962: <http://www.al-islam.org/al-serat/ijtihad.htm>): "Now, the kind of ijthad which, in our opinion, is forbidden is that which means "legislating" or "enacting the law", by which we mean that the mujtahid passes a judgement which is not in the Book (the Qur'án) or the Sunna, according to his own thought and his own opinion - this is technically called ijthad alra'y. According to Shi'i Islam, this kind of ijthad is forbidden, but in Sunni Islam it is permitted. In the latter the sources of legislation, and the valid proofs for determining the shar'ia, are given as the Book, the Sunna and ijthad. The Sunnis place ijthad, which is the ijthad alra'y explained above, on the same level as the Book and the Sunna."

³¹³Master of the Name is the Báb.

³¹⁴The Báb's name is Muhammad.

³¹⁵Nicolas footnote: *It was Mulla Husayn Bushru'i who received the title of Bábu'l-Báb.*

³¹⁶The followers of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i and Siyyid Kazim Rashti.

³¹⁷Unidentified sect of Islam. Muhammad-i-Zarandi, known as Nabil-i-A'zam authored a a chronicle, translated in part by Shoghi Effendi, referring to the Siyyidiyyih (p. 24): "You, especially, know who is the first witness of that faith. You know that the majority of the doctors of the Shaykhi and the Siyyidiyyih and other sects admired his science and his talent. When he came to Isfahan the urchins of the town cried out as he passed, 'Ah! Ah! a ragged student has just arrived!' But behold! This man by his proofs and arguments convinced a Siyyid, one known for his proven scientific knowledge, Muhammad-Baqir! Truly that is one of the proofs of this Manifestation, for after the death of the Siyyid, this personage went to see most of the doctors of Islam and found Truth only with the Master of Truth. It was then that he attained the destiny which had been determined for him. In truth the people of the beginning and of the end of this Manifestation envy him and will envy him until the Day of Judgment. And who then can accuse this master-mind of mental weakness and infidelity?"

³¹⁸Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i in Isfahan

³¹⁹This refers to Haji Siyyid Muhammad Baqir-i-Rashti, whom Mulla Husayn encountered in Isfahan under the following circumstances, as related in "The Dawn-breakers" (pp. 19-24):

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The news of the passing of his beloved master brought unspeakable sorrow to the heart of Siyyid Kazim. Inspired by the verse of the Qur'án, "Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths; but God only desireth to perfect His light, albeit the infidels abhor it," he arose with unswerving purpose to consummate the task with which Shaykh Ahmad had entrusted him. He found himself, after the removal of so distinguished a protector, a victim of the slanderous tongue and unrelenting enmity of the people

around him. They attacked his person, scorned his teachings, and reviled his name. At the instigation of a powerful and notorious shi'ah leader, Siyyid Ibrahim-i-Qazvini, the enemies of Siyyid Kazim leagued together, and determined to destroy him. Thereupon Siyyid Kazim conceived the plan of securing the support and good will of one of the most formidable and outstanding ecclesiastical dignitaries of Persia, the renowned Haji Siyyid Muhammad Baqir-i-Rashti, who lived in Isfahan and whose authority extended far beyond the confines of that city. This friendship and sympathy, Siyyid Kazim thought, would enable him to pursue untrammelled the course of his activities, and would considerably enhance the influence which he exercised over his disciples. "Would that one amongst you," he was often heard to say to his followers, "could arise, and, with complete detachment, journey to Isfahan, and deliver this message from me to that learned Siyyid: 'Why is it that in the beginning you showed such marked consideration and affection for the late Shaykh Ahmad, and have now suddenly detached yourself from the body of his chosen disciples? Why is it that you have abandoned us to the mercy of our opponents?' Would that such a messenger, putting his trust in God, might arise to unravel whatever mysteries perplex the mind of that learned Siyyid, and dispel such doubts as might have alienated

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his sympathy. Would that he were able to obtain from him a solemn declaration testifying to the unquestioned authority of Shaykh Ahmad, and to the truth and soundness of his teachings. Would that he also, after having secured such a testimony, might visit Mashhad and there obtain a similar pronouncement from Mirza Askari, the foremost ecclesiastical leader in that holy city, and then, having completed his mission, might return in triumph to this place." Again and again did Siyyid Kazim find opportunity to reiterate his appeal. None, however, ventured to respond to his call except a certain Mirza Muhit-i-Kirmani, who expressed readiness to undertake this mission. To him Siyyid Kazim replied: "Beware of touching the lion's tail. Belittle not the delicacy and difficulty of such a mission." He then, turning his face towards his youthful disciple, Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i, the Bábu'l-Báb,[1] addressed him in these words: "Arise and perform this mission, for I declare you equal to this task. The Almighty will graciously assist you, and will crown your endeavours with success."

Mulla Husayn joyously sprang to his feet, kissed the hem of his teacher's garment, vowed his loyalty to him, and started forthwith on his journey. With complete severance and noble resolve, he set out to achieve his end. Arriving in Isfahan, he sought immediately the presence of the learned Siyyid. Clad in mean attire, and laden with the dust of travel, he appeared, amidst the vast and richly apparelled company of the disciples of that distinguished leader, an insignificant and negligible figure. Unobserved and undaunted, he advanced to a place which faced the seat occupied by that renowned teacher. Summoning to his aid all the courage and confidence with which the instructions of Siyyid Kazim had inspired him, he addressed Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir in these words: "Hearken, O Siyyid, to my words, for response to my plea will ensure the safety of the Faith of the Prophet of God, and refusal to consider my message will cause it grievous injury." These bold and courageous words, uttered with directness and force, produced a surprising impression upon the Siyyid. He suddenly interrupted his discourse, and, ignoring his audience, listened with close atten-

[1] He was the first to believe in the Báb, who gave him this title.

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tion to the message which this strange visitor had brought. His disciples, amazed at this extraordinary behaviour, rebuked this sudden intruder and denounced his presumptuous pretensions. With extreme politeness, in firm and dignified language, Mulla Husayn hinted at their discourtesy and shallowness, and expressed surprise at their arrogance and vainglory. The Siyyid was highly pleased with the demeanour and argument which the visitor so strikingly displayed. He deplored and apologised for the unseemly conduct of his own disciples. In order to compensate for their ingratitude, he extended every conceivable kindness to that youth, assured him of his support, and besought him to deliver his message. Thereupon, Mulla Husayn acquainted him with the nature and object of the mission with which he had been entrusted. To this the learned Siyyid replied: "As we in the beginning believed that both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim were actuated by no desire except to advance the cause of knowledge and safeguard the sacred interests of the Faith, we felt prompted to extend to them our heartiest support and to extol their teachings. In later years, however, we have noticed so many conflicting statements and obscure and mysterious allusions in their writings, that we felt it advisable to keep silent for a time, and to refrain from either censure or applause." To this Mulla Husayn replied: "I cannot but deplore such silence on your part, for I firmly believe that it involves the loss of a splendid opportunity to advance the cause of Truth. It is for you to set forth specifically such passages in their writings as appear to you mysterious or inconsistent with the precepts of the Faith, and I will, with the aid of God, undertake to expound their true meaning." The poise, the dignity and confidence, which characterised the behaviour of this unexpected messenger, greatly impressed Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir. He begged him not to press the matter at this moment, but to wait until a later day, when, in private converse, he might acquaint him with his own doubts and misgivings. Mulla Husayn, however, feeling that delay might prove harmful to the cause he had at heart, insisted upon an immediate conference with him about the weighty problems which he felt impelled and able to resolve. The Siyyid was moved to tears by the youthful enthusiasm,

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the sincerity and serene confidence to which the countenance of Mulla Husayn so admirably testified. He sent immediately for some of the works written by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, and began to question Mulla Husayn regarding those passages which had excited his disapproval and surprise. To each reference the messenger replied with characteristic vigour, with masterly knowledge and befitting modesty.

He continued in this manner, in the presence of the assembled disciples, to expound the teachings of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, to vindicate their truth, and to defend their cause, until the time when the Mu'adhdhin, calling the faithful to prayer, suddenly interrupted the flow of his argument. The next day, he similarly, in the presence of a large and representative assembly, and whilst facing the Siyyid,

resumed his eloquent defence of the high mission entrusted by an almighty Providence to Shaykh Ahmad and his successor. A deep silence fell upon his hearers. They were seized with wonder at the cogency of his argument and the tone and manner of his speech. The Siyyid publicly promised that on the following day he would himself issue a written declaration wherein he would testify to the eminence of the position held by both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, and would pronounce whosoever deviated from their path as one who had turned aside from the Faith of the Prophet Himself. He would likewise bear witness to their penetrative insight, and their correct and profound understanding of the mysteries which the Faith of Muhammad enshrined. The Siyyid redeemed his pledge, and with his own hand penned the promised declaration. He wrote at length, and in the course of his testimony paid a tribute to the character and learning of Mulla Husayn. He spoke in glowing terms of Siyyid Kazim, apologised for his former attitude, and expressed the hope that in the days to come he might be enabled to make amends for his past and regrettable conduct towards him. He read, himself, to his disciples the text of this written testimony, and delivered it unsealed to Mulla Husayn, authorising him to share its contents with whomsoever he pleased, that all might know the extent of his devotion to Siyyid Kazim.

No sooner had Mulla Husayn retired than the Siyyid charged one of his trusted attendants to follow in the foot-

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steps of the visitor and find out the place where he was residing. The attendant followed him to a modest building, which served as a madrisih,[1] and saw him enter a room which, except for a worn-out mat which covered its floor, was devoid of furniture. He watched him arrive, offer his prayer of thanksgiving to God, and lie down upon that mat with nothing to cover him except his aba.[2] Having reported to his master all that he had observed, the attendant was again instructed to deliver to Mulla Husayn the sum of a hundred tumans,[3] and to express the sincere apologies of his master for his inability to extend to so remarkable a messenger a hospitality that befitted his station. To this offer Mulla Husayn sent the following reply: "Tell your master that his real gift to me is the spirit of fairness with which he received me, and the open-mindedness which prompted him, despite his exalted rank, to respond to the message which I, a lowly stranger, brought him. Return this money to your master, for I, as a messenger, ask for neither recompense nor reward. 'We nourish your souls for the sake of God; we seek from you neither recompense nor thanks.'^[4] My prayer for your master is that earthly leadership may never hinder him from acknowledging and testifying to the Truth."^[5] Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir died before the year sixty A.H., the year that witnessed the birth of the Faith proclaimed by the Báb.

[1] "The Madrisih or Persian colleges are entirely in the hands of the clergy and there are several in every large town. They generally consist of a court, surrounded by buildings containing chambers for students and masters, with a gate on one side; and frequently a garden and a well in the centre of the court.... Many of the madrisihs have been founded and endowed by kings or pious persons." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 365.)

[2] A loose outer garment, resembling a cloak, commonly made of camel's hair.

[3] Worth approximately one hundred dollars, a substantial sum in those days.

[4] Qur'án, 76:9.

[5] The Báb, in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih," refers to Mulla Husayn in these terms: "You, especially, know who is the first witness of that faith. You know that the majority of the doctors of the Shaykhi and the Siyyidiyyih and other sects admired his science and his talent. When he came to Isfahan the urchins of the town cried out as he passed, 'Ah! Ah! a ragged student has just arrived!' But behold! This man by his proofs and arguments convinced a Siyyid, one known for his proven scientific knowledge, Muhammad-Baqir! Truly that is one of the proofs of this Manifestation, for after the death of the Siyyid, this personage went to see most of the doctors of Islam and found Truth only with the Master of Truth. It was then that he attained the destiny which had been determined for him. In truth the people of the beginning and of the end of this Manifestation envy him and will envy him until the Day of Judgment. And who then can accuse this master-mind of mental weakness and infidelity?" ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 54.)

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He remained to his last moment a staunch supporter and fervent admirer of Siyyid Kazim.

Having fulfilled the first part of his mission, Mulla Husayn despatched this written testimony of Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir to his master in Karbila, and directed his steps towards Mashhad, determined to deliver, to the best of his ability the message which he was charged to give to Mirza Askari. Immediately the letter, enclosing the Siyyid's written declaration, was delivered to Siyyid Kazim, the latter was so rejoiced that he forthwith sent to Mulla Husayn his reply, expressing his grateful appreciation of the exemplary manner in which he had discharged his trust. He was so delighted with the answer he had received that, interrupting the course of his lecture, he read out, to his disciples, both the letter of Mulla Husayn and the written testimony enclosed in that letter. He afterwards shared with them the epistle which he himself had written to Mulla Husayn in recognition of the remarkable service he had rendered him. In it Siyyid Kazim paid such a glowing tribute to his high attainments, to his ability and character that a few among those who heard it suspected that Mulla Husayn was that promised One to whom their master unceasingly referred, the One whom he so often declared to be living in their very midst and yet to have remained unrecognized by them all. That communication enjoined upon Mulla Husayn the fear of God, urged him to regard it as the most potent instrument with which to withstand the onslaught of the enemy, and the distinguishing feature of every true follower of the Faith. It was couched in such terms of tender affection, that no one who read it could doubt that the writer was bidding farewell to his beloved disciple, and that he entertained no hope of ever meeting him again in this world.

³²⁰Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, head of the Shaykhi community.

³²¹Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i.

³²²This speaks of the far-ranging journeys of Mulla Husayn in search of the promised one as bidden by Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti.

³²³The Báb.

³²⁴Nicolas footnote: *To Siyyid Yahya Darabi*. He was called Vahid, and since the numerical value of Vahid is 10, reducible to 1, he was "the number of the name of God".

³²⁵About him Shoghi Effendi writes (God Passes By, p. 11): "Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi, surnamed Vahid, one of the most erudite, eloquent and influential of his subjects—a man who had committed to memory no less than thirty thousand traditions..."

³²⁶The Báb's commentary on Qur'án CVIII.

³²⁷Shoghi Effendi translated this paragraph in a footnote to "The Dawn-Breakers":

"You, especially, know who is the first witness of that faith. You know that the majority of the doctors of the Shaykhi and the Siyyidiyyih and other sects admired his science and his talent. When he came to Isfahan the urchins of the town cried out as he passed, 'Ah! Ah! a ragged student has just arrived!' But behold! This man by his proofs and arguments convinced a Siyyid, one known for his proven scientific knowledge, Muhammad-Baqir! Truly that is one of the proofs of this Manifestation, for after the death of the Siyyid, this personage went to see most of the doctors of Islam and found Truth only with the Master of Truth. It was then that he attained the destiny which had been determined for him. In truth the people of the beginning and of the end of this Manifestation envy him and will envy him until the Day of Judgment. And who then can accuse this master-mind of mental weakness and infidelity?" (Shoghi Effendi, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 24, note no.5, from "Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 54.)

³²⁸Nicolas footnote: *I do not want to be known, I want God to be known. But what is to be done, because I am the intermediary required by this knowledge?*

³²⁹Baha'u'llah writes in one of His Tablets (TB, p. 156): "The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His Divine Manifestation." In another Tablet (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 166) He writes: "The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same."

³³⁰Nicolas footnote: *Those ones of today are truly [the same as] those who said of Muhammad, "He's a lunatic!" Of what importance is it that they deny this. By the very fact that they say of the Báb that he is a lunatic, they demonstrate that they would have acted this way towards Muhammad.*

³³¹Nicolas footnote: *In this world, nothing exists by itself. For example, obscurity, this is a word. Clarity exists, we see it; when it disappears, then is born obscurity, which is but the absence of clarity. The shadow does not exist in itself, and it depends upon the cause which produces it. Things do not exist in and of themselves, and if they are given names it is because of the "cause" that has produced them. How many Pharaohs succeeded one another upon the throne without their names subsisting. Alone the one who was hostile to Moses has remained celebrated. Not because of himself does he exist more than the others; he exists only because of the name of Moses.*

³³²Referring to the great number of Bábís, which must have numbered in the tens of thousands by the time this book was revealed, in 1848.

³³³Qur'án IV:81.

³³⁴Nicolas footnote: *Abandon the apparent meaning of this verse and penetrate into its inner meaning. The testimony of God suffices — here is not the God in which you believe, it is the 'Man Yuz.hirhu'llah', the Prophet Who testifies. The God Whom you see in your imagination, speaking, acting, ordaining, can not be seen by His creature, so how can He testify?*

³³⁵Man Yuz.hirhu'llah.

³³⁶God.

³³⁷Qur'án.

³³⁸Baha'u'llah confirms this statement when He indicates that we receive divine guidance from the Prophet and His Book, not from our own hearts:

"It behoveth thee to consecrate thyself to the Will of God. Whatsoever hath been revealed in His Tablets is but a reflection of His Will. So complete must be thy consecration, that every trace of worldly desire will be washed from thine heart. This is the meaning of true unity.

"Do thou beseech God to enable thee to remain steadfast in this path, and to aid thee to guide the peoples of the world to Him Who is the manifest and sovereign Ruler, Who hath revealed Himself in a distinct attire, Who giveth utterance to a Divine and specific Message. This is the essence of faith and certitude. They that are the worshipers of the idol which their imaginations have carved, and who call it Inner Reality, such men are in truth accounted among the heathen." (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 338)

"And among the people is he who layeth claim to inner knowledge, and still deeper knowledge concealed within this knowledge. Say: Thou speakest false! By God! What thou dost possess is naught but husks which We have left to thee as bones are left to dogs. By the righteousness of the one true God! Were anyone to wash the feet of all mankind, and were he to worship God in the forests, valleys, and mountains, upon high hills and lofty peaks, to leave no rock or tree, no clod of

earth, but was a witness to his worship — yet, should the fragrance of My good pleasure not be inhaled from him, his works would never be acceptable unto God. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Lord of all. How many a man hath secluded himself in the climes of India, denied himself the things that God hath decreed as lawful, imposed upon himself austerities and mortifications, and hath not been remembered by God, the Revealer of Verses. Make not your deeds as snares wherewith to entrap the object of your aspiration, and deprive not yourselves of this Ultimate Objective for which have ever yearned all such as have drawn nigh unto God. Say: The very life of all deeds is My good pleasure, and all things depend upon Mine acceptance. Read ye the Tablets that ye may know what hath been purposed in the Books of God, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Bounteous. He who attaineth to My love hath title to a throne of gold, to sit thereon in honour over all the world; he who is deprived thereof, though he sit upon the dust, that dust would seek refuge with God, the Lord of all Religions." (Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, K36)

³³⁹Hikmat ilahi in this case seems to refer to divine wisdom, the direct perception of spiritual things. 'Abdu'l-Baha speaks of this: "These obvious arguments are adduced for weak souls; but if the inner perception be open, a hundred thousand clear proofs become visible. Thus, when man feels the indwelling spirit, he is in no need of arguments for its existence; but for those who are deprived of the bounty of the spirit, it is necessary to establish external arguments." ('Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 6)

³⁴⁰Qur'án XXVIII:88.

³⁴¹The face, or countenance of God is an expression denoting the Manifestation of God.

³⁴²The collective name for all of the Writings of the Báb.

³⁴³Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i.

³⁴⁴Siyyid Kazim Rashti.

³⁴⁵Nicolas footnote: *Kumayl ibn Zayd was one of the intimates of 'Ali. For a long time he wanted to ask him a question and did not find the [right] occasion. One day he went out with 'Ali by the [city] gate of Kufa. In their walk they went far enough that they could only distinguish the town with difficulty. Then 'Ali addressed his companion, saying, "O Kumayl! Know that the heart of man is like a vase, and the best of vases is that which neither leaks nor overflows when something is poured inside of it." Then Kumayl asked him, "What is the haqíqat uluhiyyih?" 'Ali replied: "What do you want to do, O Kumayl, with this truth? Part the curtains that keep you from seeing, then you will see that I am the truth." Today it is the Báb who is the truth.*

³⁴⁶Nicolas footnote: *To be ecstatic in God so that all of His qualities impregnate themselves into oneself as the properties of fire impregnate themselves in red [hot] iron.*

³⁴⁷Nicolas footnote: *It is upon this passage, among others, that the Solitary of Cyprus bases his claim to*

be title of successor to the Báb.

³⁴⁸Nicolas footnote: *Prayers that one must say in the month of Ramad.an.*

³⁴⁹Nicolas footnote: *The fifth Imam.* Muhammad ibn 'Ali Baqir (57/675-114/732), poisoned by Ibrahim ibn Walid ibn 'Abdallah, the nephew of Hisham, the Umayyad caliph according to some Shi'i historical sources.

³⁵⁰Nicolas footnote: *Here is found the word "Baha", the title given to Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri who, in Adrianople, declared himself the Man Yuz.hiruhu'llah. He rallied to himself the greater part of the Bábís who presently distinguish themselves either as Bahá'ís or Azalis.*

³⁵¹Nicolas footnote: *The Imam Baqir had said that this prayer was the most sublime of [all] prayers because it contained the greatest of the names of God — Baha! The Islamic world remained naturally in agreement [with the Imam's statement] until the day on which someone dared to tell Aqa Najafí, the mujtahid of Isfahan that this was precisely the name of Man Yuz.hiruhu'llah promised by the Báb. Aqa Najafí since then forbade the recitation of this prayer.*

³⁵²Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i (1753-1826), born and educated in Bahrain and subsequently in the great Islamic seminaries of Najaf and Karbala in present-day Iraq, this founder of the Shaykhi School lived in Iran for the last two decades of his life, principally in Yazd and Kermanshah. There he was under the protection and patronage of certain Qajar princes, and was much revered by the common people. He was offered a position in the court of Fath-'Ali Shah (r. 1798-1834), preferring to minister to the laity and to the many Muslim theological students who flocked to his lectures. His philosophical and theological writings constitute the latest development in the hikmat iláhí movement, also associated with the School of Isfahan and Ishraqi theosophy, prior to the advent of the Báb and Baha'u'llah. He and his successor, Siyyid Kazim Rashti, are regarded as heralds of the Bábí religion by both the Báb and Baha'u'llah.

³⁵³Shoghi Effendi translates this passage from Dala'il-i-sab'ih in a footnote to "The Dawn-breakers" (p. 18, note 2): "The words of the revered Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i are well known. They contain numerous allusions to the subject of the Manifestation. For example, he has written with his own hand to Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti: 'Just as it is necessary in order to build a house to have suitable ground, so also for this Manifestation must the moment be propitious. But here one cannot give an answer clearly foretelling the moment. Soon we shall know it with certainty.' That which you have heard so often yourself from Siyyid Kazim, is not that an explanation? Did he not reiterate every minute—'You do not wish then that I should go away so that God may appear?'"

³⁵⁴Reference to the coming of the Mahdi.

³⁵⁵ The original recipient of the Seven Proofs was an eye-witness to the last voyage of Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, and therefore probably a Shakhi, and a person with whom the Báb had some acquaintance.

³⁵⁶These are two Shaykhis who have not yet been identified.

³⁵⁷Kazimayn is one of the cities sacred to the Imami Shi'i, in the 'Atabat, and contains the tombs of the seventh Imam, Musa-Kazim, and the ninth Imam, Muhammad-Taqi, known as Imam Rida and al-Jawad.

³⁵⁸Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti.

³⁵⁹Nicolas footnote: *The professor of the Imam Jum'ih of Isfahan, became a Bábí and was killed.*

³⁶⁰Unidentified person.

³⁶¹In this case, Haji 'Ali Muhammad is not the Báb, but refers to another individual, probably not a Siyyid.

³⁶²Al-A'la, a name of the Báb.

³⁶³This practice of randomly opening the Qur'án to a verse and then taking that verse to answer whatever question one is seeking to answer, believing that this practice will reveal the divine Will was widely and frequently employed in 19th century Iran.

³⁶⁴Unidentified person.

³⁶⁵'Ilm al-hurufat, or 'ilm-i-huruf, known also as gematria and numerology, an esoteric science much practiced in Imami Shi'i intellectual culture and employed by the Báb.

³⁶⁶In "The Dawn-Breakers" (p. 188), there is the following description of Haji Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i:

While Vahid [1] was still in Shiraz, Haji Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i [2] arrived and was introduced by Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali into the presence of the Báb. In a Tablet which He addressed to Vahid and Haji Siyyid Javad, the Báb extolled the firmness of their faith and stressed the unalterable character of their devotion. The latter had met and known the Báb before the declaration of His Mission, and had been a fervent admirer of those extraordinary traits of character which had distinguished Him ever since His childhood. At a later time, he met Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad and became the recipient of His special favour. When, a few years afterwards, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to Adrianople, he, already much advanced in years, returned to Persia, tarried awhile in the province of Iraq, and thence proceeded to Khurasan. His kindly disposition, extreme forbearance, and unaffected simplicity earned him the appellation of the Siyyid-i-Nur.[3]

[1] Title given by the Báb to Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi.

[2] The remarkable circumstances attending the conversion of Haji Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i are fully related in the "Kashfu'l-Ghita" (pp. 70-77), and reference is made to a significant Tablet revealed to him by Bahá'u'lláh (p. 63), in which the importance of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is fully stressed, and the necessity of exercising the utmost caution and moderation in the application and execution of its precepts emphasised.

The text of this Tablet is found on pp. 64-70 of the same book. The following passage of the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" refers to the conversion of Haji Siyyid Javad: "Aqa Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i a dit qu'avant la manifestation, un indien lui avait écrit le nom de celui qui serait manifeste." In English: Aqa Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i said that before the appearance [of the Báb], an Indian had written him with the name of the One Who would appear. ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 59 .)

[3] Literally meaning "radiant siyyid".

³⁶⁷See Note 290.

³⁶⁸Unidentified person.

³⁶⁹This is a disembodied voice.

³⁷⁰Unidentified Bábí.

³⁷¹Refers here to the Báb.

³⁷²This passage from Dala'il-i-sab'ih is translated by Shoghi Effendi in a footnote to "The Dawn-breakers" (p. 18, note 2): "There is also the anecdote referring to Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i on his way to Mecca. It has been proven that this anecdote is authentic and hence there is something which is certain. The disciples of the deceased have related the sayings which they have heard and also certain personages were mentioned such as Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq and Murtada-Quli. Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq relates that the Shaykh said to them one day: 'Pray that you may not be present at the beginning of the Manifestation and of the Return, as there will be many civil wars.' He added: 'If any one of you should still be living at that time, he shall see strange things between the years sixty and sixty-seven. And what strange thing can be more strange than the very Being of the Manifestation? You will be there and you will witness another extraordinary event; that is to say, God, in order to bring about the victory of the Manifestation, will raise up a Being who will speak his own thoughts without ever having been instructed by anyone.'"

³⁷³The Báb affirms that it is authentic and He immediately cites the evidence, that eye-witnesses heard this statement made.

³⁷⁴Unidentified.

³⁷⁵Unidentified.

³⁷⁶Unidentified.

³⁷⁷Nicolas footnote: *The return of the hidden Imam, who appears upon the earth as the Imam Mahdi.*

³⁷⁸Unidentified.

³⁷⁹Unidentified.

³⁸⁰Unidentified.

³⁸¹Unidentified.

³⁸²Nicolas footnote: *What is the purpose of a Muslim? To see the Imam Mahdi. And so, know that in order to see him the following conditions must be: take "ra" and add "ghayn". "Ra"=200, "gh"=1000, "ya"=10 and "nun"=50, total=1260 which is the year of the Manifestation. Add to it "he"=5 and "alif"=1, total=1226 which is the year of his death. Do you want to know his name? Here it is: take "huwa", the greatest name of God, uncouple it, you obtain 110 which has the same sum as 'Ali, then you put "muh" before "mad" and you will finally have 'Ali Muhammad.*

³⁸³Unidentified verses of the Báb.

³⁸⁴The opening invocation of 113 out of 114 Suras of the Qur'án is "bismi'llah al-rahman al-rahim" and Sura #9, Suratu'l-Tawba has no opening invocation.

³⁸⁵Meaning, in the Writings of the Báb.

³⁸⁶Two hundred sixty one commentaries on this bismillah, opening verse of most Suras of the Qur'án. These commentaries have not been identified.

³⁸⁷Even as Muslims recognize that sufficient proof of the prophethood of Muhammad is contained in the Bismillah ar-rahman ar-rahim which opens most chapters of the Qur'án, so also it should be sufficient for Muslims to recognize that sufficient proof of the prophethood of the Báb is contained in the Bismillah al-'Ali al-'Azim.

³⁸⁸Shoghi Effendi reports, in "The Dawn-Breakers" (pp. 195-196), that Husayn Khan, the governor of Shiraz, became alarmed at the numbers of people who were attracted to the Person and Teachings of the Báb, so much so that he ordered 'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan, the chief constable of the city, to arrest the Báb and those in His immediate company, with the intention of executing them:

'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan retired to execute his task. He, together with his assistants, broke into the house of Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali [1] and found the Báb in the company of His maternal uncle and a certain Siyyid Kazim-i-Zanjani, who was later martyred in Mazindaran, and whose brother, Siyyid Murtada, was one of the Seven Martyrs of Tihiran. He immediately arrested them, collected whatever documents he could find, ordered Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali to remain in his house, and conducted the rest to the seat of government. The Báb, undaunted and self-possessed, was heard to repeat this verse of the Qur'án: "That with which they are threatened is for the morning. Is not the morning near?" No sooner had the chief constable reached the marketplace than he discovered, to his amazement, that the people of the city were fleeing from every side in consternation, as if overtaken by an appalling calamity. He was struck with horror when he witnessed the long train of coffins being hurriedly transported through the streets, each followed

by a procession of men and women loudly uttering shrieks of agony and pain. This sudden tumult, the lamentations, the affrighted countenances, the imprecations of the multitude distressed and bewildered him. He enquired as to the reason. "This very night," he was told, "a plague [2] of exceptional virulence has broken out. We are smitten by its devastating power. Already since the hour of midnight it has extinguished the lives of over a hundred people. Alarm and despair reign in every house. The people are abandoning their homes, and in their plight are invoking the aid of the Almighty." [3]

[1] September 23, 1845 A.D. See "Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 204.

[2] Outbreak of cholera.

[3] The Báb refers to this incident in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" in the following terms: "Recall the first days of the Manifestation, how many people died of cholera! That was one of the wonders of the Manifestation yet no one understood it. During four years the scourge raged among the Muhammadan Shiites without anyone grasping its true significance." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, pp. 61-62.)

Shoghi Effendi elaborates the account in "God Passes By" (p. 13):

"An outbreak of cholera, devastating in its virulence, had, since midnight, already smitten above a hundred people. The dread of the plague had entered every heart, and the inhabitants of the stricken city were, amid shrieks of pain and grief, fleeing in confusion. Three of the governor's domestics had already died. Members of his family were lying dangerously ill. In his despair he, leaving the dead unburied, had fled to a garden in the outskirts of the city. Abdu'l-Hamid Khan, confronted by this unexpected development, decided to conduct the Báb to His own home. He was appalled, upon his arrival, to learn that his son lay in the death-throes of the plague. In his despair he threw himself at the feet of the Báb, begged to be forgiven, adjured Him not to visit upon the son the sins of the father, and pledged his word to resign his post, and never again to accept such a position. Finding that his prayer had been answered, he addressed a plea to the governor begging him to release his Captive, and thereby deflect the fatal course of this dire visitation. Husayn Khan acceded to his request, and released his Prisoner on condition of His quitting the city."

³⁸⁹Nor was this the only miraculous event that transpired in connection with the Báb's ministry. Shoghi Effendi reports, in "God Passes By", referring to the execution of the Báb: "The very moment the shots were fired a gale of exceptional violence arose and swept over the city. From noon till night a whirlwind of dust obscured the light of the sun, and blinded the eyes of the people. In Shiraz an "earthquake," foreshadowed in no less weighty a Book than the Revelation of St. John, occurred in 1268 A.H. which threw the whole city into turmoil and wrought havoc amongst its people, a havoc that was greatly aggravated by the outbreak of cholera, by famine and other afflictions." (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, pp. 53-54) Once more an outbreak of cholera, and no awakening of the population of Shiraz from its heedlessness and unbelief.

³⁹⁰Qur'án XVIII:102.

³⁹¹Jahannam is the Qur'anic name for "hell".

³⁹² This is progressive revelation at work — during the Dispensation of the Manifestation, the chief among His followers are the learned, particularly those learned who practice what they preach. When the new Manifestation appears, the learned followers of the previous Manifestation are put to the test, and if they do not recognize Him, their actions are not in harmony with the good-pleasure of God. Only recognition of and obedience of the new Manifestation is pleasing to God.

³⁹³Qur'an VII:184.

³⁹⁴Nicolas footnote: *I have given the translation of the verse of the Qur'an here following Mr. Kazimirski, but it does not serve the text closely enough. One must translate "In what will they believe after God and His verses" but the verses were revealed through the intermediary of Muhammad. After this, men cannot believe except in the verses. The period of material miracles is closed, and the subsequent prophets will present themselves as carriers of verses as the sign of their missions.*

³⁹⁵To reject all the attributes insofar as they distract from the unity, the essential unity of God, the unity of His religion, the unity of His Manifestations.

³⁹⁶As elaborated in an earlier footnote, God can only be known through His Manifestation.

³⁹⁷Minor occultation, the seventy year period from the disappearance of the twelfth Imam until the decease of the fourth Báb, circa 260-330 AH/892-962 CE.

³⁹⁸Unidentified person.

³⁹⁹Unidentified person.

⁴⁰⁰Unidentified book.

⁴⁰¹The hidden Imam.

⁴⁰²Here the Báb appears to be quoting Himself.

⁴⁰³Mustafa is a title of the Prophet Muhammad.

⁴⁰⁴Murtada is a title of the Imam 'Ali ibn Abu Talib.

⁴⁰⁵Zuh'ra is a title of Fatimih, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, wife of the Imam 'Ali and mother of the Imam Hasan and the Imam Husayn.

⁴⁰⁶Rida is a title of the Imam Hasan, the son of Fatimih and the Imam 'Ali.

⁴⁰⁷Not clear intention in the text.

⁴⁰⁸This seems to refer to the Letters of the Living.

⁴⁰⁹The Sun of Reality referred to here is Him Whom God shall make manifest.

⁴¹⁰Nicolas footnote: *Prayers which one must repeat several times a day, sentence which a mujtahid ordains for someone to pronounce to obtain the object of his desires, the Persian word is verde.*

⁴¹¹Nicolas footnote: *When God will be presented one by one with the souls of human beings He will pronounce their sentence in one word: negation — affirmation.*

⁴¹²Nicolas footnote: *This red sulphur transmutes leather into gold.*

⁴¹³The philosophical stone is the substance sought for centuries, perhaps millennia by alchemists, who believed that this substance could transform any metal into gold.

⁴¹⁴Sirat is the narrow bridge to salvation, mentioned often in the Qur'án and interpreted in the Writings of the Báb.

⁴¹⁵Nicolas footnote: *Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i and Siyyid Kazim Rashti.*

⁴¹⁶In the Bayán it is deeds not words that count. Baha'u'llah reiterates this teaching in a number of His Tablets: "The essence of faith is fewness of words and abundance of deeds; he whose words exceed his deeds, know verily his death is better than his life." (Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 156) "Let deeds, not words, be your adorning." (The Persian Hidden Words) "Guidance hath ever been given by words, and now it is given by deeds. Every one must show forth deeds that are pure and holy, for words are the property of all alike, whereas such deeds as these belong only to Our loved ones. Strive then with heart and soul to distinguish yourselves by your deeds." (The Persian Hidden Words) In other Tablets Baha'u'llah has simply emphasized the importance of deeds, and in this case we will cite only those found in His last Book (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf):

"We have decreed that war shall be waged in the path of God with the armies of wisdom and utterance, and of a goodly character and praiseworthy deeds. Thus hath it been decided by Him Who is the All-Powerful, the Almighty." (p. 24)

"The fruits of the tree of man have ever been and are goodly deeds and a praiseworthy character." (p. 25)

"In this Revelation the hosts which can render it victorious are the hosts of praiseworthy deeds and upright character." (p. 26)

"It is incumbent upon thee to summon the people, under all conditions, to whatever will cause them to show forth spiritual characteristics and goodly deeds, so that all may become aware of that which is the cause of human upliftment, and may, with the utmost endeavor, direct themselves towards the most sublime Station and the Pinnacle of Glory." (p. 27)

"This people need no weapons of destruction, inasmuch as they have girded themselves to reconstruct the world. Their hosts are the hosts of goodly deeds, and their arms the arms of upright conduct, and their commander the fear of God." (p. 74)

"Occupy thyself, during these fleeting days of thy life, with such deeds as will diffuse the fragrance of Divine good pleasure, and will be adorned with the ornament of His acceptance." (p. 76)

"Strive thou, that haply thou mayest achieve a deed the fragrance of which shall never fade from the earth." (p. 115)

"Help, then, your Lord with the hosts of goodly deeds and a praiseworthy character." (p. 135)

"Its hosts are a praiseworthy character and goodly deeds." (p. 136)

"In that land We forbad all mischief, and all unseemly and unholy deeds." (p. 166)

⁴¹⁷It appears that the Báb is indicating that the first priority of the Gospels was to announce the coming of Muhammad. It is also possible that He is making reference to the opening verses of the Gospel of John: "1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

⁴¹⁸Unidentified verse of the Bayán.

⁴¹⁹According to Bábí and Bahá'í theology, creation did not have a beginning and will not have an end, except that God has created all things, and that He ontologically precedes His creation, and that in comparison with Him the world of creation is contingent and dependent, and therefore not essentially eternal but conditionally eternal.